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# English 20


## Module 4

## The Novel



Distance  
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# **English 20**

## **Module 4**

# **THE NOVEL**



**Distance  
Learning**

**Alberta**  
EDUCATION



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Other	

English 20  
Student Module  
Module 4  
The Novel  
Alberta Distance Learning Centre  
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Welcome to Module 4!

We hope you'll enjoy your study of  
The Novel.

We've included a prerecorded  
audiocassette with this module. The  
cassette will help you work through  
the material and it will enhance your  
listening skills.

So whenever you see this icon,

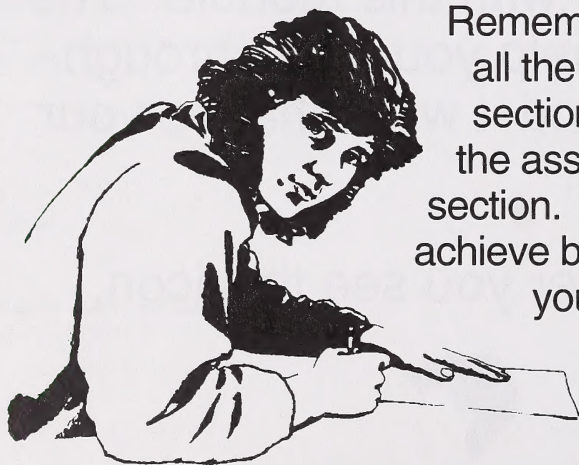


turn on your tape and listen.



Since there are no response lines provided in the Student Module Booklets of this course, you'll need a notebook or lined paper to respond to questions, complete charts, and answer questionnaires. It's important to keep your lined paper handy as you work through the material and to keep your responses together in a notebook or binder for review purposes later. Read all the questions carefully, and respond to them as completely as possible. Then compare your responses with the ones supplied in the Appendix.

Some of your personal responses you'll be asked to keep in a separate folder – your Writing Folder. This is explained in Module 1.



Remember to work through all the activities in each section before attempting the assignment for that section. This will help you achieve better success in your studies.

Good luck.



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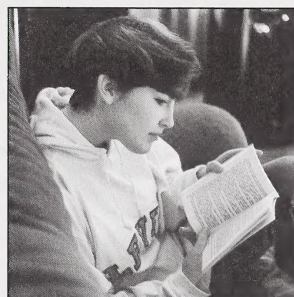
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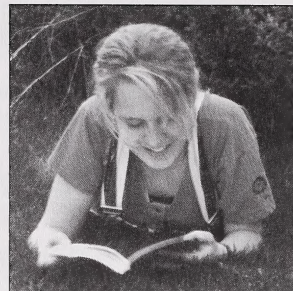
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## MODULE OVERVIEW



*"They're the same, only different."*

*"Same as what?"*

*"Short stories."*

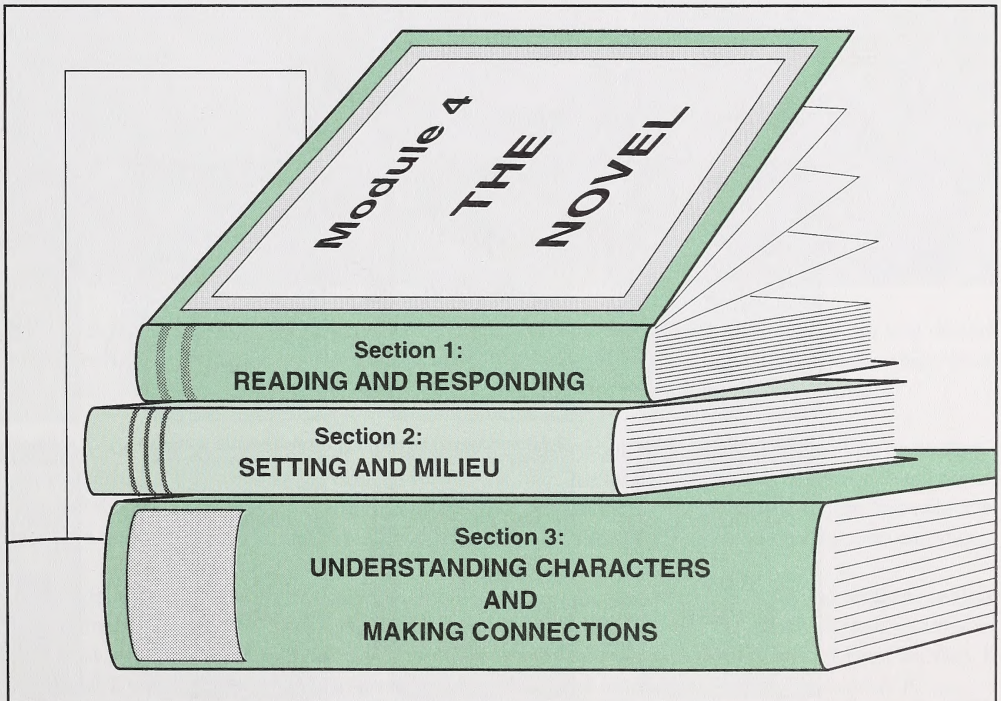
*"How are they different?"*

*"They're longer. . ."*

Have you ever read a short story that was so great you wished it were longer? Just when the author gets you so involved with the characters that you feel you know them, the story ends. If you frequently have this experience, you're probably someone who enjoys reading novels. Reading a novel and learning to understand what you read require some detective work, but don't be afraid of how long it is: jump into another world and live someone else's life for a while!

In this module you'll read the novel *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles.

This novel deals with the friendship of two teenagers at a private boys' prep school in New Hampshire. It's based on one incident that occurs at Summer Session in their senior year, during World War II. That single incident affects both boys' lives dramatically, and the book shows that actions have consequences that must be faced. The novel has much to say about human nature, but it makes a good story too. You should enjoy reading it.





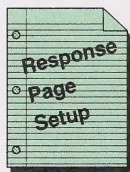
## Evaluation

Your mark for this module will be determined by how well you complete the assignments at the end of each section. In this module you must complete three section assignments and one final module assignment. The mark distribution is as follows:

Section 1 Assignment	20 marks
Section 2 Assignment	30 marks
Section 3 Assignment	25 marks
Final Module Assignment	25 marks
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 marks</b>

When doing your assignments, work slowly and carefully. If you're having difficulties, go back and review the appropriate section.

Read all parts of your assignment carefully. Plan and do your rough work on your own paper. Revise and edit your responses; then set up your final copy for submission on your own paper. Lined looseleaf is recommended. Make sure your answers are neat and organized, with wide left margins and space for teacher comments after each assignment.



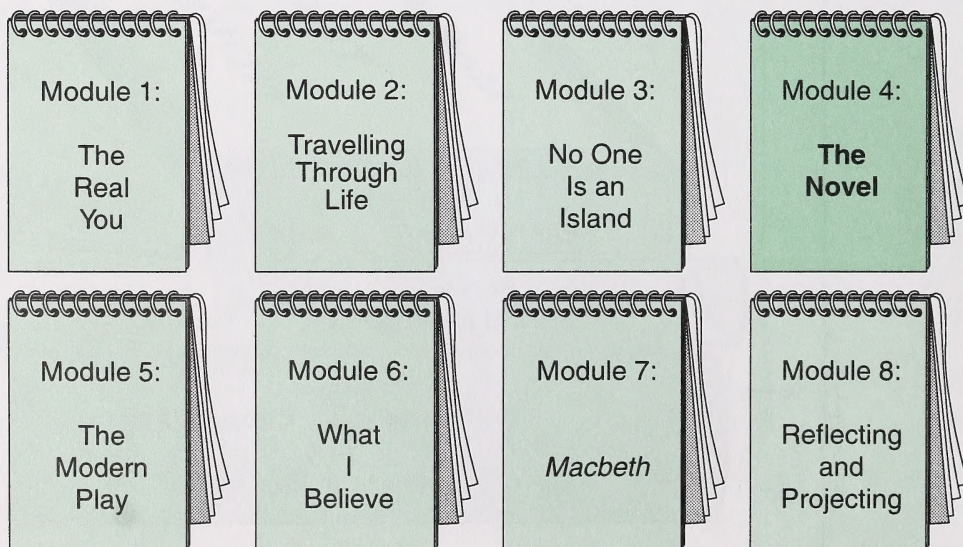
When you see this icon, ideas and details are provided to help you set up and organize your answer in a certain way.

Before submitting your responses, be sure to proofread them carefully to ensure that they say what you want, that they're neat and clear, and that they're complete and missing no material.

You'll be submitting **only** your **assignment response pages** (and in some cases an audiotape or videotape cassette) for evaluation.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

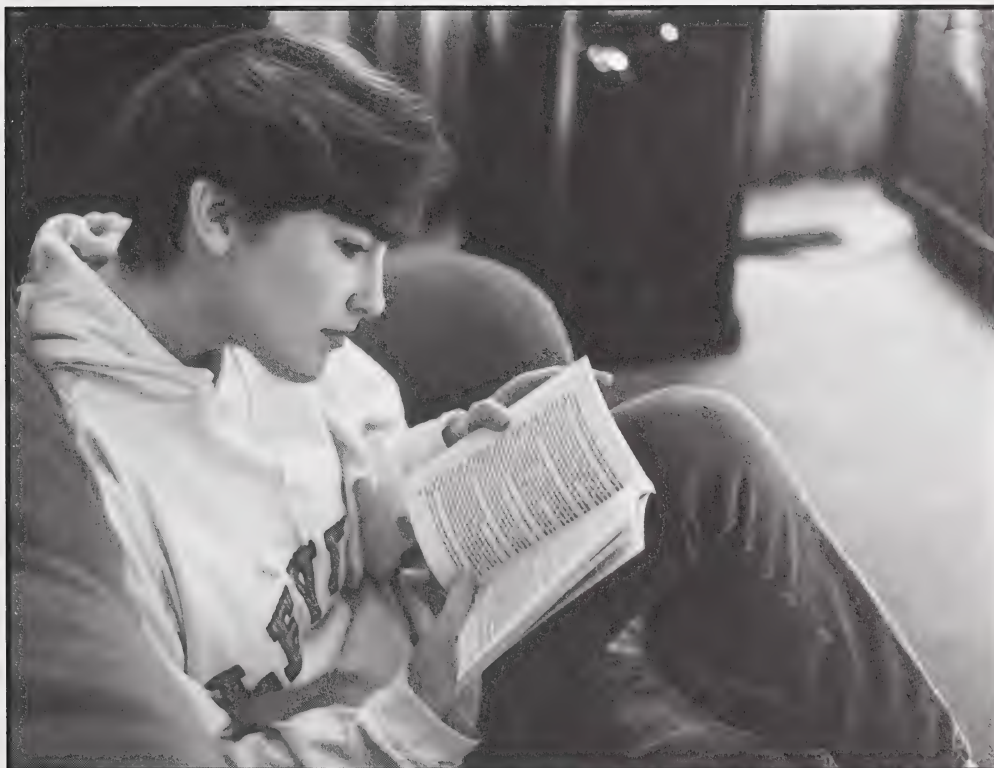
English 20 contains eight modules.





## SECTION

## 1

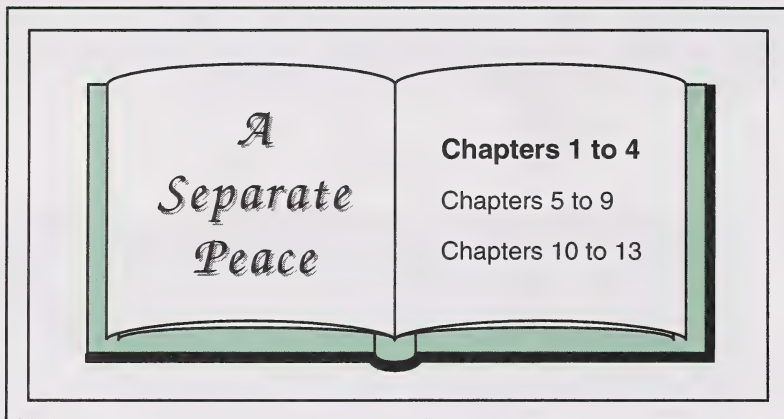
READING AND  
RESPONDING

Do you enjoy escaping into the imaginary worlds created by the writers of novels? If so, you should enjoy Section 1; it gives you the chance to indulge yourself and enjoy a good book while your conscience can relax in the knowledge that you're hard at work on your English 20 course.

Section 1 has been designed to help you understand, think about, and respond to what you're reading. Always remember, a good reader is an active reader. The personal experiences you bring to the novel will, and should, affect your response to what you read. Your life experiences are different from anyone else's, so the novel you're about to read will have a special meaning for you that no one else can share.

Remember to read the novel critically. Ask questions, predict outcomes, look for the motives behind actions, make inferences from things characters say and do. After all, as is the case with anything else in life, what you get out of a novel is largely dependent on what you put into it. In your Section 1 Assignment you'll get the chance to present and explain your reaction to reading *A Separate Peace*.

## Activity 1: The Opening Chapters



### A Separate Peace

To make *A Separate Peace* a little easier to understand, you'll read it in three parts. As you read, you'll be asked to record your thoughts and responses in your Writing Folder. After you've finished reading the entire book, you can check back to find out if your predictions were accurate and if your feelings about the book have changed.

In this activity you'll be reading the first four chapters of the novel, but to get started it would probably be best to deal with the first chapter by itself.

Read chapter 1 of *A Separate Peace* now. Be sure to find a comfortable, quiet spot, free of distractions, and, if possible, allow yourself enough time to read the first chapter in one sitting. When you've done your reading, do the Writing Folder exercise and the question that follow.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

- Did the author get you interested in the first few pages?
- Which character interests you most? Why?
- What do you think will happen to him?
- What do you think the conflict is going to be?

1. The story begins in the present when the narrator returns to Devon to visit his old school. The author chooses very descriptive words to give the mood or atmosphere of a grey, wet, lifeless place. He uses words like *empty*, *exhausted*, and *deserted*.

From the first few pages of chapter 1, find six other words that were carefully chosen to create this mood or atmosphere and list them here.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.**





A  
Separate  
Peace

Now that you’ve made a beginning, it’s time to read chapters 2, 3, and 4. Again, try to set aside enough time so that you can read at least one chapter at a sitting. When you’ve finished reading the first four chapters of the novel, answer the questions that follow.

2. Sometimes it’s difficult to keep all the characters straight in your mind when you begin a new novel. After you’ve finished reading chapter 4, construct a chart similar to the following. Then fill in the names of the characters described in the chart. The first one is done for you as an example.

Name/Nickname	Character Clue
<i>Gene Forrester</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is the narrator</li><li>• failed his trigonometry test</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• broke a swimming record</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was Gene's competition for head of the class</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was first to suggest the name <i>blitzkrieg</i></li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refused a pass in blitzball</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was substitute master for the summer</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• was substitute headmaster</li><li>• was host of the summer “tea”</li></ul>

3. After the first few introductory pages, the author of *A Separate Peace* uses a flashback to tell the rest of the story – a technique you looked at in Module 1. This technique allows the narrator to slip back to his days at Devon School and tell us what happened while he was a student there. Why might the author have selected the flashback technique as a means of telling the story?

*Character sketch: a description of the personality of a character – usually from a work of fiction*

4. From what you’ve read of Finny in the first four chapters, write a **character sketch** of him. In your sketch try to describe Finny’s personality, backing up what you say about him with direct reference to the events in the novel. Here are a few things you might consider in your sketch:

- Finny’s propensity for breaking rules
- the rules he himself tended to “cast in the form of Commandments”
- his invention of the game “blitzball”
- his winning of awards
- his goals

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.

The first time the boys went to the tree by the river, Gene jumped off even though he didn’t want to. Sometimes you feel you have to go along with what your friends are doing, even if it doesn’t feel right to you. This phenomenon is known as *peer pressure*. If the following conversation sounds familiar, you know all about peer pressure.





**WRITING FOLDER**

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

1. Tell about a time you did something you didn't really want to do just because you felt your friends were pressuring you. What did you do? How did you feel?
2. Give your opinion on peer pressure and whether you think it's better to go along with the crowd or to stand up for what you believe.



While the boys were enjoying the easygoing days of the summer session at school, the Second World War was being fought in Europe. Because the boys were too young to enlist, the war seemed far away and unreal to them.

The pressure of war in the background is constantly reinforced for the reader, however, as an ominous portrait of things to come. We read, for example, of the senior boys preparing for entry into the military; and when Finny invents a new ball game, he calls it *blitzball* from the German word *blitzkrieg* (*lightning-war*).

5. Although the United States didn't experience the bombing raids that devastated Europe, people living in America were affected by the war. Find four things that Gene remembers being different during the war (see chapter 3).

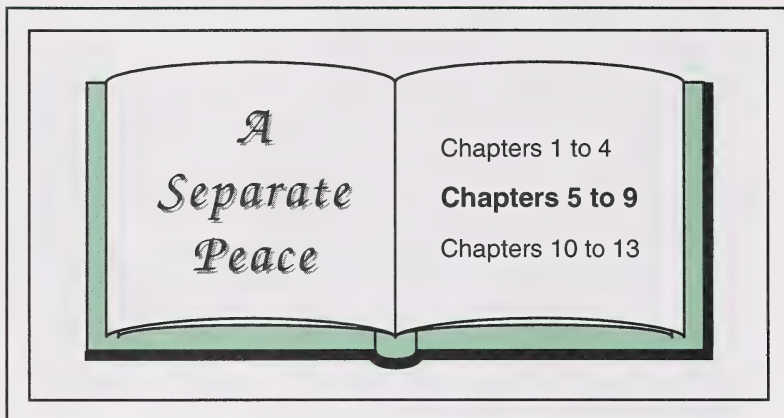
Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 1.

**WRITING FOLDER**

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Gene turned against Finny when he believed his friend was deliberately trying to ruin his chances of being top student in his year. In a paragraph or two explain your feelings about this belief of Gene's. Why do you think he convinced himself that this was going on?

## Activity 2: The Middle Chapters



### A Separate Peace

To begin this activity, read chapters 5 through 9 of *A Separate Peace*. As usual, try to find a spot free of distractions and, if you can, read at least one chapter at each sitting. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. Gene and Finny are contrasting characters or character foils – a concept you were introduced to in Module 3. The attitudes of the two boys are very different indeed. Show these differences by classifying the following statements under the correct headings on character files similar to those shown for the two boys on the next page. Two have been done as examples.

- It's his nature to conform to rules.
- He believes that when you play a game, you win.
- He's a pretty good athlete.
- He can't do well on written tests.
- He believes that there are consequences to breaking rules.
- He maintains that there is no war.
- He's won numerous sports awards.
- He's an A-student in every course but one.
- He wonders if he might be a coward.
- He's just barely passing his courses.
- He fails a trigonometry test because he can't study.
- He can talk his way out of trouble.
- He understands that for every winner there's a loser.
- He lives by his own rules.
- He wants to enlist but pretends he doesn't.
- He's ready to enlist but changes his mind.



**PHINEAS (Finny)****RULES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**SPORTS:** - *believes that when you play a game, you win*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**WAR:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**GENE****RULES:** - *conforms to rules*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**SPORTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**WAR:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. When Gene visits Finny in the infirmary after his fall from the tree, they talk about what happened. Finny says he remembers he “had a kind of feeling.”

What do you think Finny was feeling when he looked at Gene just before he fell?

3. Do you think Gene really wanted Finny to fall and possibly hurt himself? Explain your ideas.

Finny is sent home to recuperate, refusing to listen when Gene visits him and tries to tell him that falling from the tree was no accident. While they’re separated, Gene undergoes some changes at the start of the new school term. He decides, for example, not to participate in sports. Likewise, he feels inadequate in class and not up to his usual standards. He antagonizes Quackenbush and ends up hitting him, proving that he really doesn’t want to be assistant crew manager.

4. Find a quotation that shows how Gene feels about Quackenbush.



Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Gene feels a “soaring sense of freedom” as a result of Phineas’s phone call. He finally figures out what his purpose is – “to become a part of Phineas.”

In your own words describe what you think Gene means by becoming “a part of Phineas.” Does he just mean he’d do things that Phineas could no longer do, or is something more involved?

In these chapters the war is brought closer to home for the boys; for example, they pick apples and clear the railroad tracks because local men have enlisted or gone to work in factories.



5. When they see the troops on the train, Gene says

They seemed to be having a wonderful time, their uniforms looked new and good; they were clean and energetic; they were going places.

What does this tell you about the students' view of war?

6. a. Why does Gene decide to enlist?  
b. What changes his mind?
7. Until now, in spite of everything, I had welcomed each new day as though it were a new life, where all past failures and problems were erased, and all future possibilities and joys open and available, to be achieved probably before night fell again. Now, in this winter of snow and crutches with Phineas, I began to know that each morning reasserted the problems of the night before, that sleep suspended all but changed nothing, that you couldn't make yourself over between dawn and dusk. (chapter 8)

Explain in your own words how Gene has changed.

8. a. How does Finny explain to Gene that there is no war?  
b. Why is it important to Finny to maintain that the war isn't real?

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Both Finny and Gene have changed since the accident. After Finny returns to school, there seems to be a role reversal: Gene has become more like Finny used to be, and Finny seems more like Gene. Describe the role reversal that takes place between Gene and Finny. What are your feelings about it?

The title of the book, *A Separate Peace*, is taken from a passage in chapter 9:

It wasn't the cider which made me surpass myself, it was this liberation we had torn from the gray encroachments of 1943, the escape we had concocted, this afternoon of momentary, illusory, special and separate peace.

Before going on to question 9, do the following:

- Use a dictionary to look up any unfamiliar words in this quotation.
  - Reread the entire page on which the quotation appears (very near the end of chapter 9) to get the context in which it's given.
9. In your own words, explain what the title of the novel means.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 2.**

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

At the end of chapter 9 Gene receives a telegram from Leper. What do you think it means? What will Gene do about it? Is this an effective way to end the chapter? Why or why not?

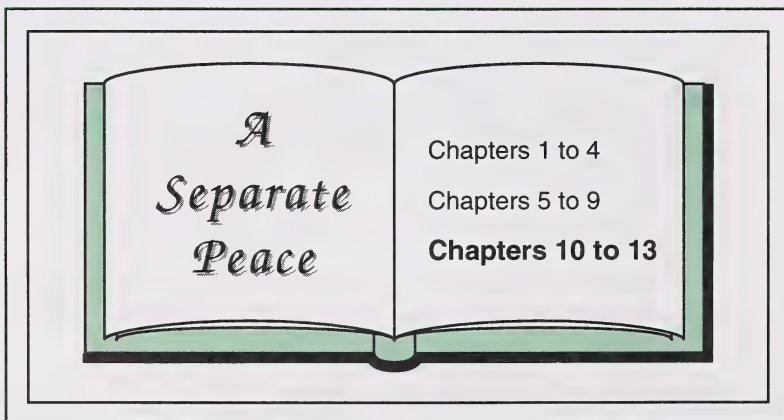
### TELEGRAM

I HAVE ESCAPED AND NEED HELP. I AM AT CHRISTMAS LOCATION.  
YOU UNDERSTAND. NO NEED TO RISK ADDRESS HERE. MY SAFETY  
DEPENDS ON YOU COMING AT ONCE.

(signed) YOUR BEST FRIEND,

ELWIN LEPER LEPELLIER

## Activity 3: The Final Chapters



A  
Separate  
Peace

Now it's time to finish reading *A Separate Peace*. As always, try to find a quiet spot and arrange enough time for yourself so that you can read at least a chapter at a sitting. When you've finished the book, go on with the rest of this activity.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder describe your feelings about the way the novel ends. Are you puzzled? satisfied? depressed? elated? Explain.



1. When Gene travels to Vermont to visit Leper after receiving his telegram, it's obvious that his friend has been deeply affected and changed by the war.

Construct a chart similar to the one on the right. From what you know of Leper from his school days (chapter 7), supply examples for your chart to explain how he's different now.

Changes	Examples
• has lost touch with reality	
• is easily upset	
• likes to talk	

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 3.

WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder describe your feelings about what the war has done to Leper.

In chapter 11 Brinker tells Gene that “it wouldn’t do you any harm, you know, if everything about Finny’s accident was cleared up and forgotten.” Clearly Brinker doesn’t think that it was an accident. Later, in the First Academy Building, the accused, the victim, and a surprise witness give their versions of what happened the night Finny fell from the tree.

2. Imagine you’re Brinker Hadley and fill in a “Report of Crime” form like the one that follows using the information from the mock trial in chapter 11.

REPORT OF CRIME

DATE CRIME OCCURRED: August, 1942

COMPLAINANT: Brinker Hadley

WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_

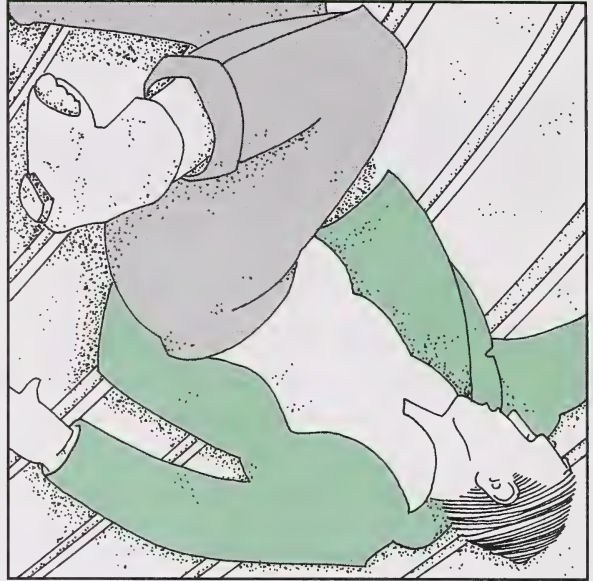
SUSPECT: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DETAILS: (Describe what happened. Tell what the witness said. Give a possible reason why the crime occurred.)

3. Finny leaves before all the facts are in, saying “I just don’t care. Never mind.” Do you think he has finally accepted the fact that Gene deliberately caused the fall? Explain your ideas.
4. How can Finny’s first fall be said to have broken his life as well as his leg?

5. When Finny realizes the truth of his fall, he runs away and breaks his leg again.
- When Gene and Finny meet again the next day, what explanation do they arrive at which seems to satisfy them both as to why the fall occurred?
  - Do you think this is a fair explanation? Explain your ideas.

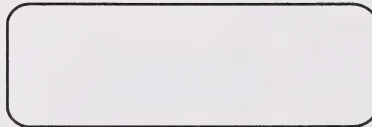


6. Brinker's father represents the older generation, and the author uses him to show the differing views of war. Find quotations from the novel that would be appropriate for the boys' speech balloons and that would show what their attitudes are.



**Mr. Hadley**

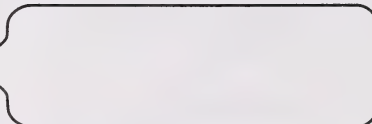
*...if you can say that you were up front where there was some real shooting going on, then that will mean a whole lot to you in years to come.*



**Gene**



**Brinker**





WRITING FOLDER


In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

I never killed anybody and I never developed an intense level of hatred for the enemy. Because my war ended before I ever put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there.

This quotation is the third-last paragraph in the novel. In your own words explain what you think Gene meant. Who or what was his enemy? What was his war?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 3.

7. Gene says that Finny has not died; his spirit lives on. What do you think Gene has learned as a result of his friendship with Finny and what they've been through together? If you were a teacher, how would you grade Gene's progress? Construct and fill in a progress report similar to the following.



PROGRESS REPORT

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SENIOR COURSES:

I. Dealing with guilt

II. Making Decisions

III. Understanding Relationships

IV. Handling Fear

V. Taking Risks

U	I	S

TEACHER COMMENTS:                     (encouragement and predictions)

U = UNSATISFACTORY    I = IMPROVING    S = SATISFACTORY

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Activity 3.

**WRITING FOLDER**

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Complete these sentences; write as much as you feel is necessary.

- The part I liked best about this novel was...
- The part I liked least about this novel was...
- I wonder what would have happened if...

**Follow-up Activities**

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

**Extra Help**

1. In *A Separate Peace*, you were introduced to many minor characters. Although they don't always add to the action, they contribute life and colour to the story. Using the clues given here, fill in the blanks on the next page to make a list of minor characters.
  - a. He's a summer substitute master.
  - b. He comes to chapel in a Naval ensign's uniform.
  - c. "I'll bet you knew all the time Finny wouldn't be back this fall. That's why you picked him for a roommate, right?"
  - d. He devotes himself to playing two things – tennis and the trumpet.
  - e. He's told to guard the cider at Winter Carnival.
  - f. "So I guess maybe racing skiers weren't ruining the sport after all. They were preparing. . . for the future."
  - g. "It was a messy break but we'll have him out of it eventually. He'll be walking again."
  - h. She contributes a lock of hair as a prize for Winter Carnival.
  - i. "I've got to have some real help around here. This crew is going to win the New England scholastics or my name isn't . . ."
  - j. "I understand that there was gaming in my dormitory this summer while you were living there. . . cards, dice."



- a. \_\_\_\_\_ **M** \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ **I** \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ **N** \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ **O** \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ **R** \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ **R** \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ **O** \_\_\_\_\_
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ **L** \_\_\_\_\_
- i. \_\_\_\_\_ **E** \_\_\_\_\_
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ **S** \_\_\_\_\_

2. A good way to review is to look at key quotations and important concepts that the author has used to tie a story and characters together.

For each quotation that follows, briefly explain in your own words what it tells you about the character in question. It might help if you underline key words or phrases in the quotation. The first one has been done to get you started.

- a. Standing on this limb, you could by a prodigious effort jump far enough out into the river for safety. . . .No Upper Middler, which was the name for our class in the Devon School, had ever tried. Naturally Finny was going to be the first to try, and just as naturally he was going to inveigle others, us, into trying it with him.

Finny likes to try things that are potentially dangerous. He's a leader and has influence over other boys.

- b. "I know I kind of dragged you away at the point of a gun, but after all you can't come to the shore with just anybody and you can't come by yourself, and at this teen-age period of life the proper person is your best pal. . . .which is what you are."
- c. Over my cot I had long ago taped pictures which together amounted to a bare-faced lie about my background. . . . But by now I no longer needed this vivid false identity; now I was acquiring, I felt, a sense of my own real authority and worth, I had many new experiences and I was growing up.
- d. I found a single sustaining thought. . . .You are both coldly driving ahead for yourselves alone. You did hate him for breaking that school swimming record, but so what? He hated you for getting an A in every course but one last term.
- e. His face had been struggling to stay calm as he listened to me, but now he was crying but trying to control himself. "It was just some kind of blind impulse you had in the tree there, you didn't know what you were doing. Was that it?"

- f. Phineas I know had been even more startled than I to discover this bitterness in himself. . . . He sat down and studied his clenched hands. "Did I ever tell you that I used to be aiming for the Olympics? . . . Well I was. And now I'm not sure, not a hundred per cent sure I'll be completely, you know, in shape by 1944. So I'm going to coach you for them instead."
3. Each of the preceding quotations contains an important concept in *A Separate Peace*. These concepts are reflected in the titles that follow. Construct a chart similar to the following and then fill in the blanks with the letters **a** to **f** to match the titles to the quotations.

Quotes	Titles
	Friendship
a	Taking Risks
	Adolescent Discovery
	Changes
	Rivalry
	Responsibility

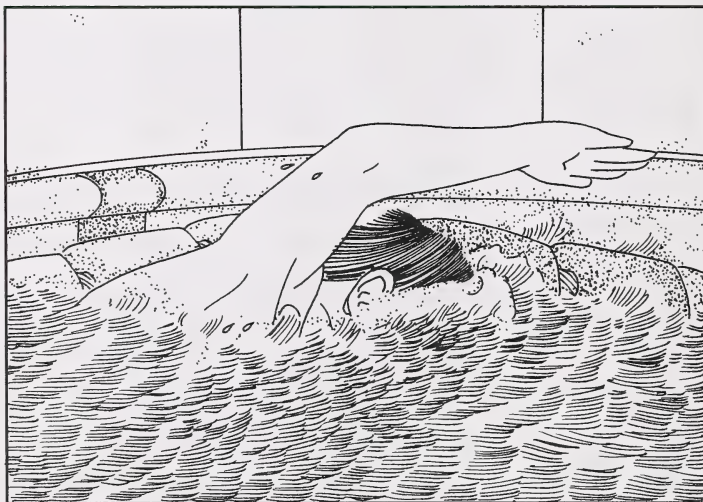
Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 1: Extra Help.

### Enrichment

Finny seems to be a person with no hatred, jealousy, or malice in his soul. He sees the world as it should be, not as it is.

How important are people like Finny in the world? Are they just unrealistic dreamers destined to be pushed aside by events, or do they contribute something important?

Discuss your ideas on this subject in a two-or-three-paragraph answer.



Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 1: Enrichment.

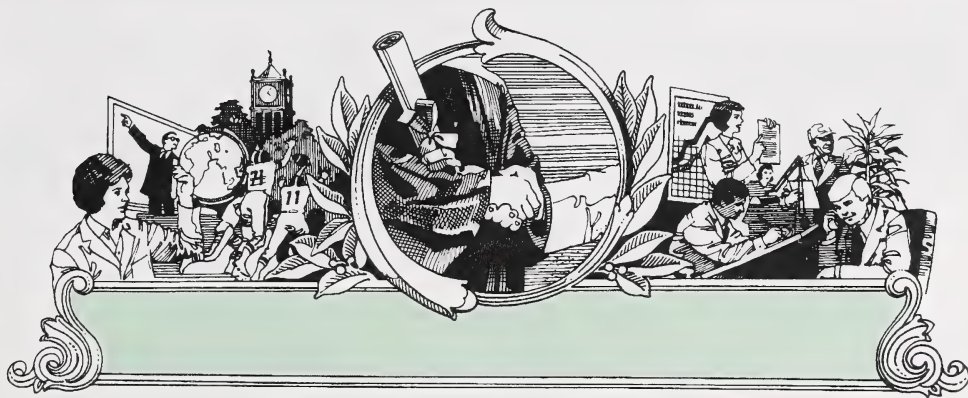


**WRITING FOLDER**

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

1. Rewrite the end of the book. If Finny hadn't died, what would have happened? Consider the following:
  - How does Finny cope with being disabled?
  - What do the boys do after graduation?
  - How does the war affect them?
  - Do they keep in touch after leaving the school?
2. Imagine that the graduating class of 1943 has a reunion in ten years. Write a conversation between any **two** of the boys at the reunion and consider the following:
  - Were they involved in the war?
  - What are their jobs?
  - Are they married?

Use a script form for your conversation. Write it as a dialogue or get a friend or parent to be one of the characters and tape your conversation.

**Conclusion**

At the beginning of this section you were asked to record your first impressions of the novel you would be reading. Did your feelings about the book change after you'd finished reading it?

*A Separate Peace* is a more complex novel than it first appears. It makes for good reading taken simply as a story about boys growing up; but the novel, if read by an attentive, critical, active reader, says much more about life and the human condition. In the sections yet to come you'll be digging into the novel somewhat more deeply. Section 2, which you'll be doing next, looks principally at how the milieu of both the writer and the reader of a work of fiction, along with the setting in which the writer chooses to place the work, affect the reading experience.

## Section 1 Assignment: Reading and Responding

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 4      Section 1 Assignment      Page #      Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

What is your reaction to *A Separate Peace*?

Write a full and comprehensive response of several paragraphs to this question.

Your response should state your opinion and give reasons for your reactions. Be specific in your writing. Tell what you liked and what you didn't like. Be sure to explain your reasons.

You will be marked according to the following criteria:

- **Content** – the degree of understanding your response shows of the novel (Your response to it will, of course, be personal.)
- **Organization** – how well you structure and organize your response
- **Style** – how well you present your ideas and structure your language
- **Mechanics** – spelling, grammar, punctuation

Remember to use the writing process you studied in previous modules.



## SECTION

## 2

SETTING AND  
MILIEU

If you were to write a novel today about your home town, would people a hundred years from now understand things going on in Alberta – or wherever you live – that affected your writing?

When people write books or stories, they aren't sealed in windowless rooms where no outside influences can affect them. They might live in cities where many people are unemployed and thousands are homeless, or in countries that are under attack in a war, or on farms where it hasn't rained for three years. They feel the impact of tax increases, racial discrimination, and fatal illnesses. It seems logical that their beliefs and attitudes are reflected in what they write and that events they experience have an influence on their stories.

Sometimes it helps you to understand novels if you learn something about the authors and the time periods in which they worked. This way you can better see the reasons the authors chose specific times and places for the settings of their stories and ways in which their ideas influenced the themes, events, and actions in their books.

In this section you'll look at how the milieus, or environments, of writers influence their writing and, as well, at how the milieus and backgrounds of readers influence their interpretations of what they read. Finally, you'll spend some time looking at the settings writers create in their novels and the effects these settings have on events, characters, and moods in what they write. You'll be able to apply what you've learned to your Section 2 Assignment.

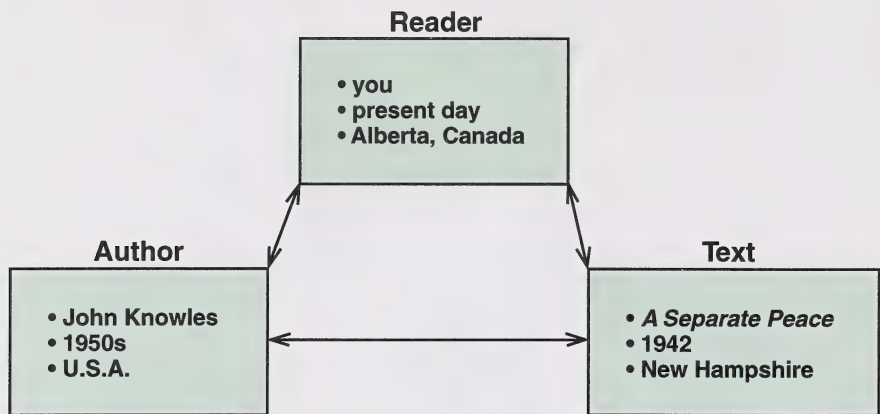
## Activity 1: The Author



Reading a book is a little like being a time traveller. In order to get the full meaning from a novel, you need to travel in three time dimensions:

- the author's time period
- the story's time period
- your (the reader's) time period

Study the diagram that follows. It shows how all three time dimensions are connected for *A Separate Peace*.



*Milieu: the environment or surrounding circumstances in which something is set or occurs or in which someone lives*

The time period in which something occurs (for example, in which a book is written) along with the set of surrounding circumstances – social, economic, intellectual, and so on – is often called the **milieu** in which that event takes place. Clearly the milieus in which writers produce their works often play an important role in determining what those works will be like. After all, what people value and the way they think is to a large degree determined by the age they live in and by their own life experiences.

In order to see how the events of authors' own lives are sometimes reflected in the novels they write, read this summary of Canadian author W.O. Mitchell's novel *Who Has Seen the Wind*. (This novel will be used frequently in the two remaining sections for purposes of illustration.)

### *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell

Brian O'Connell is a child who lives in a small Saskatchewan town during the 1930s. The book shows the process of his maturing to the age of eleven. Brian lives with his father (who owns the town drugstore), his mother, grandmother, and younger brother.

Brian is an intelligent boy who asks questions of everyone in his search for answers about God and the meaning of life. Mr. Digby, the school principal, understands Brian's curiosity and tries to help him find answers. He learns about life from school, relatives, sex education, and the deaths of his pet dog, his father, and grandmother.

Brian is most deeply influenced by the prairie, but at first he is unable to figure out why. He loves to spend time there and feels a sort of power in the flat land, so alive and constantly changing. Eventually he realizes the Divine contribution to his own existence.





WESTFILE INC

Now that you know something of what the novel *Who Has Seen the Wind* is about, read the following biographical information about the author. As you read, underline or highlight the points that seem to relate to the story. Then answer the question that follows the biographical information.

## W.O. Mitchell

1914-

- Early years:**
- born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan
  - father owned and operated a drugstore, but died when Mitchell was still a boy
- Education:**
- went to high school in Florida
  - attended University of Manitoba and University of Alberta
- Jobs:**
- in early years was lifeguard, deckhand on a Greek tramp steamer, insurance salesman, radio and newspaper ad salesman
  - in 1928 became high school principal
  - in 1942 published first short story in *Maclean's*
  - in 1947 published *Who Has Seen the Wind*
  - in 1948 became fiction editor for *Maclean's* for three years; then started writing full time
- Personal Philosophy:**
- The two central themes in his writing both deal with important issues.
  - The prairies are a symbol of things that last forever, and people are troubled by that.
  - The small town is a smaller version of the world and shows all the passions and problems of humanity.
  - Mitchell recognizes the influences of being close to nature.

1. List the details from Mitchell's life that you feel probably influenced his writing of *Who Has Seen the Wind*. Give reasons for your choices.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1.

*A Separate Peace* was written by John Knowles. Read the biographical information on this writer; then answer the question that follows it.

### John Knowles

1926-

- Early years:**
- born in Fairmont, West Virginia, U.S.A.
- Education:**
- at age fifteen entered Phillips Exeter Academy, a private New England Prep School (1941-45)
  - awarded a B.A. in English by Yale University (1945-9)
- Interests:**
- was on varsity swim team in university
  - was editor of university newspaper; contributed stories to the undergraduate literary magazine
  - is fluent French linguist
  - has travelled throughout Europe
- Jobs:**
- from 1950 to 1952 was reporter for *Hartford Courant*
  - from 1952 to 1956 was free-lance writer and associate editor for *Holiday*
  - in 1960 published *A Separate Peace* and became a full-time writer
- Personal Philosophy:**
- Knowles recognizes the savage force within the individual. He believes that sin is unavoidable but salvation is possible.
  - He feels that human beings can overcome evil by accepting the fact that they are imperfect.
  - He believes that war is caused by the ignorance of good within people's hearts.

2. What experiences from the life of John Knowles appear to have influenced his writing? In your answer explain how you think these experiences are reflected in the events in the novel.

Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 1.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Have you had experiences that are like any of those of John Knowles? Are any of your ideas about life the same as his? If so, describe the similarity in a short composition.



Before continuing, one word of warning is necessary. While the experiences of a person's own life will undoubtedly contribute greatly to any works of fiction that person writes, it's important not to forget that fiction is fundamentally a creative act – a product of the imagination. Good writers can, and do, go far beyond their own experiences when they write, and it would be a mistake to think that studying their lives can tell us all we need to know about their writing. Biographical studies are useful, but at heart it's what authors write – not what they do with their lives – that's most important in explaining their ideas and beliefs.

## Activity 2: The Text



If you take people out of the time period in which they belong, their clothing, attitudes, actions, and values will often seem out of place. This is because all people are influenced by what's happening in the world around them.

Read the following description of life in the 1960s in North America.

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### A Decade of Protest

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Of course there was the Vietnam War. Young men were forced to enlist and went halfway across the world to fight a war that they had no business being involved in. North and South Vietnam were in conflict with each other, so why did the American government feel it should get involved?

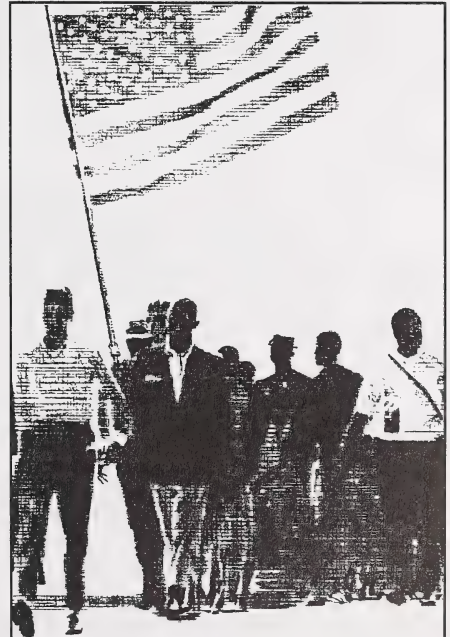
In the U.S., racial tension was mounting as Blacks demanded equality and the chance to break free of poverty and illiteracy and second-class status. There were riots and freedom marches to attract the attention of the government in order to change the way things were.

The decade of the fifties had been one of prosperity. Middle-class Americans purchased houses, refrigerators, cars, and televisions. They spent their days working to give their children all the material goods and leisure that they had never had during the War years of the 1940s. The older generation turned inward and tended to ignore the fact that the rest of society was suffering.

So their children rebelled. They decided to shock the older generation by “dropping out” of society, protesting everything their parents represented. Everything they did and said shouted at their parents, “I’m not like you.”

They went back to nature, simplifying their lifestyles. They chanted, “Make love, not war.” They hoped to end racial inequality and the Vietnam War involvement with marches, sit-ins, and love-ins.

They seemed to say, “This protest will go on until you realize there’s something wrong with the world. You can’t just close your eyes and buy another new car. The world needs changing.”



Study the father and son in this 1960s picture. Then answer the questions that follow it.



1. If the young man depicted walked into your school, would he stand out from the rest of the students? Why?
2. Consider the young man's appearance. Do you think he's trying to make a social or political statement? Explain your answer.
3.
  - a. Consider the father's appearance. Do you think he too is making a social or political statement? Explain.
  - b. Would the father be aware that he's making a statement in the same way his son is aware that he's doing this? Explain why or why not.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.**

*Setting: the time, place, and circumstances in which the events of a work of fiction take place*

Just as knowing a bit about the 60s and looking at pictures of people in that era can help you better understand what “made those people tick,” so, too, can learning about a novel’s **setting** help you to understand why the characters behave as they do and how the events in their world shape their attitudes and actions.

In order to help the reader understand the setting of a novel, the author will usually include details and references to the historical period in which the story is set. Look at this example from *Who Has Seen the Wind*.



Ain't it enough – the yearsa drought – the cutworm an' the hoppers an' hail – ain't it enough withouta – hired man all the time tryin' to save me black soul? An' there will be no wheat this year again! Baked hotter than the breath offa hell itself! If it isn't that, then it'll be the hail to knock the heads down – to dance an' jump like popcorn ona fryin' pan –<sup>1</sup>

Here W.O Mitchell has one of the characters show the frustration of western farmers when the weather destroyed their crops year after year in the thirties.

References to such things as songs, books, technology, political leaders, and major events of the time period also help readers understand more about the cultural milieu of a novel.

4. With reference to *A Separate Peace*, make a list of a few pieces of historical and/or cultural information that the author includes in the novel to establish this aspect of the setting.
5. Did you find that knowledge of the characters' milieu was necessary in order to get the full meaning from the story? If so, give an example.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 2.**

### Activity 3: The Reader

Just as authors are influenced by events in their lives and characters in novels are affected by the social climate of their time period, you, the reader, read in a milieu. You may live in an isolated northern community that can be reached only by plane or in a suburb of Edmonton or a small farming community in southern Alberta. What you know of world events, your educational background, and your family's and community's social and economic conditions will affect your reading experience.



Following are profile cards on three fictional people in Alberta. Read them carefully and try to imagine the milieu of each person profiled.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, pages 113 to 114. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

SOPHIA OLSEN

AGE: 17 MARITAL STATUS: SingleDOMICILE: with parents on farmEDUCATION: Grade 11, Smalltown High SchoolJOB(S): - part-time clerk in Co-op Feed Store- volunteer in Seniors' HomeINTERESTS: - horses, barrel racing, volleyball, comic moviesGOALS: to finish high school and train horsesPERSONALITY: outgoing; active; has strong sense of family; sensitive  
and caring with her friends

GORD DANYLUK

AGE: 27 MARITAL STATUS: SingleDOMICILE: bachelor apartment in highriseEDUCATION: Bachelor of Commerce Degree, U. of CalgaryJOB(S): computer programmerINTERESTS: computers, racquetball, science-fiction moviesGOALS: to own his own computer-consulting firm and a PorschePERSONALITY: enjoys mental challenges; prefers to spend weekends  
alone; shy but has a great sense of humour



**JANE DIONNE****AGE:** 42      **MARITAL STATUS:** married**DOMICILE:** 3-bedroom bungalow on reserve**EDUCATION:** currently working on a masters degree, U of A**JOB(S):** part-time librarian at elementary school**INTERESTS:** Canadian history, reading, Native art, politics, animal rights**GOALS:** to complete masters program, get involved in Native land claims, initiate adult-upgrading program on the reserve, serve on Council**PERSONALITY:** outgoing and energetic; extremely well-organized; a little impatient with people who accept things the way they are without question

Were you able to get an impression of these three people from the information given on the cards? Imagine you are **one** of these people and read the following excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind*. How would that person respond?

Art had taken the gopher by the tip of its tail and was holding it head down by his thumb and forefinger. He raised his arm above his head and began to swing the gopher in a large circle. "Hold yer dogs back!" he cried. He snapped his arm. The tail remained in his hand.

"They all grow back on," said Bobbie sadly as the gopher thudded to the prairie sod.

Now to one side, now to the other, the gopher ran in squeaking, erratic course, both dogs after it. The Young Ben leaped. He passed the dogs, threw himself full length upon the tailless gopher. He lay there with the squeaking under him. While the boys watched open-mouthed, he reached under him. With one merciful squeeze he choked the life from the animal. As he stood up he dropped it to the ground.<sup>1</sup>

1. How would Sophia, Gord, **or** Jane probably respond to this excerpt? Give reasons for your answer based on the profile card of the person you're discussing.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, page 126 to 127. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

2. Quickly review the summary of *Who Has Seen the Wind* in Activity 1. Would the person you're discussing be likely to enjoy reading this book? Explain why or why not.
3. Now construct and fill in a Profile Card about yourself. Use the ones you've been looking at as models.
4. Next, describe how your own background, interests, and goals affected your enjoyment of the novel you've just read.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 3.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

Describe your own milieu at greater length by writing about your community. You might begin by making a list of cultural elements. You may want to consider such things as leadership, ways in which people make their living, types of education available, the kinds of housing or living accommodations there are, any social problems you're aware of, and some of the values that most people in your community hold.



## Activity 4: The Importance of Setting



At this point are you clear on the difference between the terms *setting* and *milieu*? With reference to works of literature, the term *milieu* is often used to refer to the world in which a writer lives and out of which his or her fictional works develop. By extension, the term can refer to the reader's world as well. *Setting* is a term used to mean the time, place, and surrounding circumstances in which a work of fiction takes place. Sometimes, though, people speak of a novel's or story's milieu, meaning the overall complex of circumstances that serve as a backdrop to events – the world in which they take place. So be alert, when you encounter the term *milieu*, as to just how it's being used.

Closely related to a novel's or story's setting is the mood or atmosphere that setting creates. These are terms that should be familiar to you by now. Authors choose words, phrases, and details very carefully to create an appropriate mood or atmosphere. The setting of a novel can also contribute to the theme, and it often gives clues about the characters.

In this activity you'll examine what setting is and how an author can create an imaginary world down to the last detail.



## Finding the Right Place

In Section 2 you looked at the time period in which *A Separate Peace* was set. Now you'll discover why the author chose a particular location and how this is revealed to the reader.

Most authors find a way to indicate the time and place in which a novel is set near the beginning of the story so that readers can visualize where and when the action is taking place. Usually, however, not all the necessary details are revealed immediately. In order to help readers understand the characters' environments, authors often divulge more and more about the settings throughout their novels by interweaving details with character development and specific incidents. It's only when you finish reading such books that you see the complete picture.

Consider the novel *Who Has Seen the Wind*. If you were to illustrate the book with photographs of four important locations, these might be your choices:

### The Prairie

- wide field of ripened grain
- grain elevator in background
- gopher standing upright in foreground

### The Church



### School Days



### Uncle Sean's Farm

- farmyard
- barn, cows, and pigs
- rickety old hayrack in the foreground

1. Now imagine that you're going to direct a play based on *A Separate Peace*. You have a limited budget so you can afford only four scene changes. Think about the various locations in which the action takes place. Either write a description of the physical setting (location) for each scene or draw a simple picture to illustrate it (note that both pictures and written descriptions were used above). Give each picture or description a title.

When you chose your locations, you were probably thinking of specific incidents that happened there which you feel are necessary to tell the story.

- For each physical setting you chose, explain why you think the location and the specific incident(s) that happened there are important to the story.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.**

### Creating a Mood

It's easy to understand atmosphere while watching a movie. If a director wants to scare the audience, a bit of eerie music and a dark scene with lots of shadows will do the trick. Have you ever seen parts of horror movies filmed during a storm at night to add to the spooky mood?

Writers have a more difficult time creating atmosphere because they have to select just the right words and images to inspire the reader's imagination. Through description, an author has to help you experience a particular mood.

Read the following description of spring on the prairie from *Who Has Seen the Wind* and see if you can identify the mood that W.O. Mitchell is trying to create.



Spring came to the prairie with the suddenness of a meadow lark's song. Overnight the sky traded its winter tang for softness; the snow, already honeycombed with the growing heat of a closer sun, melted – first from the steaming fallow fields, then from the stubble stretches, shrinking finally to uneven patches of white lingering in the barrow pits. Here and there meadow larks were suddenly upon straw stacks, telephone wires, fence posts, their song clear with ineffable exuberance that startled and deepened the prairie silence – each quick and impudent climax of notes leaving behind it a vaster, emptier prairie world. The sky was ideal blue. Crows called; farmers, impatient as though it were the only spring left in the world to them, burning with the hope that this one would not be another dry year, walked out to their implements, looked them over, and planned their seeding. . . .<sup>1</sup>

- What word or words would you use to describe the feeling you got about spring while reading this passage?
- Find five words Mitchell chose to create the feeling that spring seems to arrive unexpectedly and without warning.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, pages 102 to 103. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

5. Now read the following excerpts and try to describe the feeling you get while reading each one.

- a. The Boardwalk lights against the deepening blue sky gained an ideal, starry beauty and the lights from the belt of honky-tonks and shooting galleries and beer gardens gleamed with a quiet purity in the clear twilight.

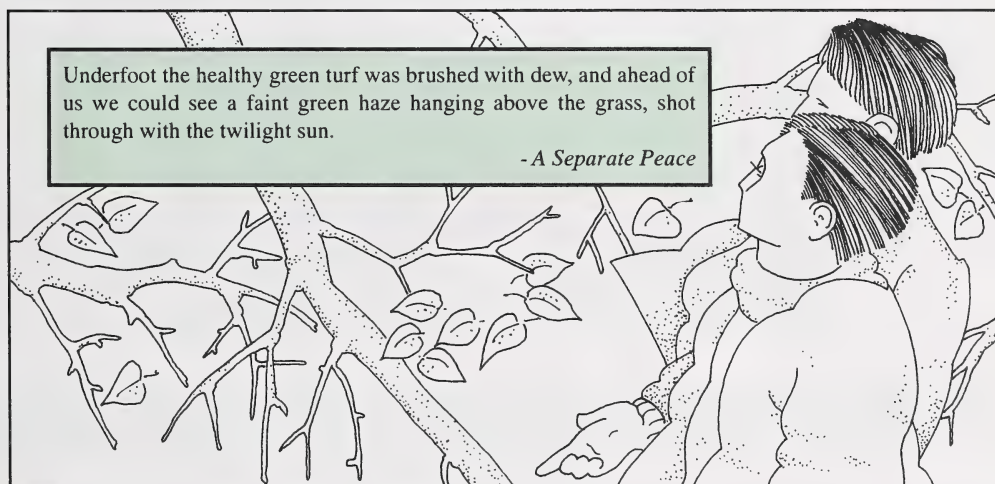
– *A Separate Peace*

- b. The wind turns in silent frenzy upon itself, whirling into a smoking funnel, breathing up topsoil and tumbleweed skeletons to carry them on its spinning way . . . .<sup>1</sup>

– *Who Has Seen the Wind*

### Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

At the beginning of *A Separate Peace* (after the flashback has begun) the setting seems appealing and attractive. John Knowles describes details of the weather, the boys' feelings, and their surroundings to create an atmosphere of happy, carefree peacefulness.



6. From the first chapter of *A Separate Peace*, select three sentences or parts of sentences that remind you of the first-day-of-summer-vacation feeling when you don't have to work or study or be responsible to anyone but yourself.
7. In your own words, describe the setting as it's presented at the beginning of *A Separate Peace*. Consider such things as the weather, sounds, feelings, and activities. Give specific examples from the novel.

Sometimes novelists use setting for dramatic effect to show contrast. In *A Separate Peace* the setting seems ideal, yet beneath the surface, the events and emotions are far from perfect.

8. Describe how the atmosphere of paradise contrasts with the reality of the actions and feelings of the characters in the novel.

### Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.

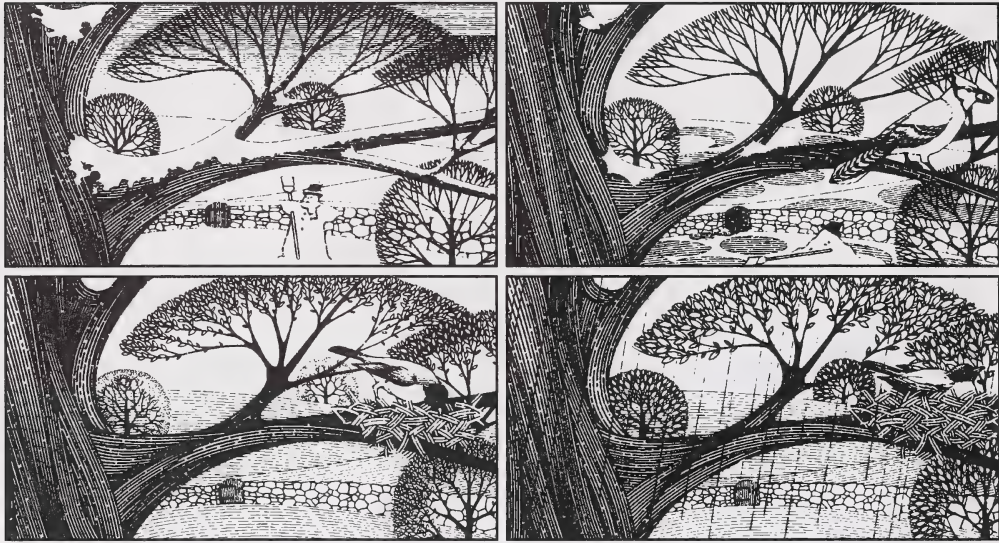
<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, page 301. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.



**WRITING FOLDER**

In your Writing Folder respond to the following:

Choose a season of the year and describe what it's like in your area. Include words that describe things you see, hear, and smell. In your description try to create a certain mood or atmosphere.

**Setting and Characters**

Fictional characters must be believable to readers, so they're placed in situations and locations that help develop their personalities. For example, in *Who Has Seen the Wind* Brian is looking for answers to questions about God and the natural world, so it would probably not be realistic for him to spend his free time in a shopping mall. It makes more sense for him to spend time on the prairie.

In *A Separate Peace*, the author gives clues about the characters through the settings he's chosen for them.

Look at the descriptions of these characters and then answer the question that follows. Each description refers to a character from the novel.



**Finny**

I'm spontaneous and impulsive. I like to try things that are dangerous. I don't believe that rules apply to me. Other boys go along with what I tell them to do.

**Gene**

I believe in following rules, and I feel strongly that there's a need for order. I'm not impulsive; I set myself goals and work methodically toward them.

I like spending time alone and I appreciate nature. I feel isolated because I think differently from the other boys.

**Leper**

9. With reference to the preceding three characters, explain whether you think the places where they spend time and what they do there are appropriate based on the descriptions you've just read. Give examples.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Activity 4.**

## Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

### Extra Help

A person's milieu is the complex of surrounding circumstances in which that person lives.

Looking at a photograph from a specific time period can provide clues about milieu. Study the picture of two Sarcee girls that follows. It was taken around 1900.

Look at the photograph's distant background. These girls live on the open prairie where there are few trees. Look at the closer background. They live in a tipi supported on a frame of wooden poles. Now look at the two girls themselves. They're wearing long dresses decorated with buckskin fringes. They both have beaded necklaces and bracelets.

What would the lives of these girls have been like? It must have been very cold getting through an Alberta winter with this sort of shelter. Would life have been hard for these girls? Just finding food on



the prairies would have been a constant challenge. It would have been necessary for many families to work together to help each other survive. These girls may not have had much time to enjoy being teenagers. They would have helped prepare food, make clothes, and look after the younger children. They wouldn't have been aware of what was going on in national politics or what fashions were being worn by women in Montreal. They probably led an isolated, nomadic life following game.



<sup>1</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta, E. Brown Collection, #B47.



Now study the picture that follows of a ferry crossing in 1910. What clues can you discover about the milieu in which the people photographed lived?



1. Describe the milieu in which the people lived. Study the background and the foreground and consider clothing, transportation, landscape, and buildings.

2. You learn about events in other parts of the world daily by reading a newspaper or watching television. How would national and international events probably have affected the people in this picture?

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.**

To try to understand the milieu of the people photographed and what their lives must have been like, try to imagine how your life would be different without washing machines, refrigerators, electricity, tractors, telephones, and cars. What would you do if your child got sick or someone had an accident?

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Explain what you think it would have been like to live in rural Alberta in 1910. Would you have enjoyed it? Why or why not?

3. Examine the opening pages of *A Separate Peace* and identify the key words and images that establish the setting – place, time, and surrounding circumstances – of the story.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Extra Help.**

### Enrichment

Do **one** or **more** of the following.

1. With a partner, choose one passage from *A Separate Peace* and read it silently. Write about the associations and feelings you got while reading. Then compare notes with your partner and discuss your reactions.
2.
  - a. Skim the first chapter of the novel quickly; don't read every line. Without looking back at the text, what details of the setting do you recall?
  - b. Go back and read the chapter deliberately, visualizing every image as it's presented in as much mental detail as possible. What is the most vivid image of the setting after careful reading?
  - c. What did you learn about creating mental pictures as you read a description?
3. Imagine that a movie director has asked you to update *A Separate Peace* so that the action takes place in the present day. Would the characters behave differently? Would the outcome of the story change in any way? Which events, songs, political leaders, or technology might you mention to establish the milieu?

Make a list of changes you'd suggest to the director. Perhaps it would be a good idea to use organizing headings. You might want to include costume ideas and suggestions for appropriate background music.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 2: Enrichment.**

## Conclusion

You've seen in this section that learning about the historical and cultural context, or milieu, in which a novel was written often adds to your enjoyment and comprehension of the novel. You've seen that the background of the author, the setting of the story, and the experiences of the reader are all connected in the reading experience. You've also looked at the importance of a novel's setting to its overall impact.

How do writers create fictional worlds that are believable? In establishing the settings of novels, authors must select details that serve many purposes. Not only do they have to set the times and locations, but by using vivid description and word pictures, they hope to convey specific atmospheres or moods. The setting of a novel also provides you with valuable character clues and reinforces the theme to help you understand the author's purpose in writing the book.

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## Section 2 Assignment: Setting and Milieu

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 4

Section 2 Assignment

Page #

Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

1. In a short essay of two or three paragraphs explain the importance of the setting to *A Separate Peace*.

In your essay remember to discuss the physical setting (the place), the time, and the milieu in which the story is set. Remember, as well, to discuss the setting's importance in the creation of mood and atmosphere. Use detailed references to the novel to defend and illustrate your ideas.

Your answer will be graded according to the same criteria as were used in your Section 1 Assignment.

2. Write a description of your community during a specific time of year.

Imagine that you're writing a novel from the first-person point of view. This description of setting might be the first chapter. Give as much information about your community as you think is necessary to help the reader get a feeling for the setting. Get the reader interested in your setting from the very first line!

A good place to get ideas for this assignment is your Writing Folder. Reread relevant rough drafts you wrote for this section before starting work.

You'll be marked on how well you convey a sense of setting and mood; try to use specific and descriptive words and phrases to make what you describe come alive for the reader. Don't forget to revise and edit your work.

Your response should be about two pages in length.



## SECTION

## 3

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTERS  
AND MAKING CONNECTIONS

Have you ever read novels or short stories in which you just didn't find the characters believable? Conversely, how many stories and novels have you read in which you find the characters so convincing you became totally caught up in their lives and hated to leave them when the book came to an end?

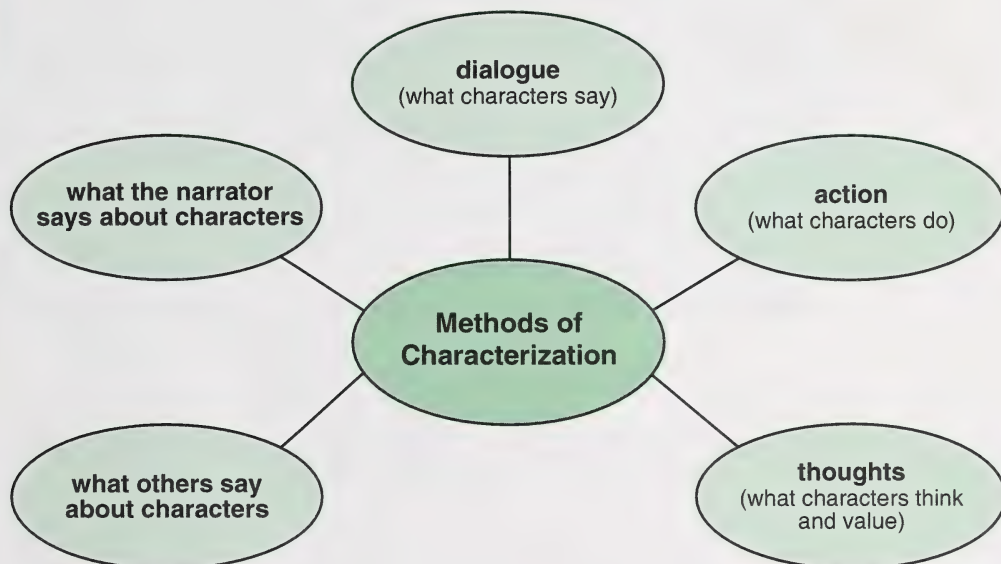
There are many ways to learn about a character, but a writer's chief purpose in characterization is to create fictional people who are believable – who behave in a consistent way and who show reasons for their actions. As a reader, you should be able to sympathize with them and care about what happens to them.

How do you get to know the people in a novel? In Module 3 you looked at what characters say, what they do, and what they think about. You also saw that sometimes the narrator simply makes a direct statement about certain characters or helps you understand them better through what others say about them. In this section you'll see that even minor characters have an important purpose in a story.

You'll learn in this section how to make comparisons and discover connections with other literature you've studied in this course. You'll be asked to think about some of the topics discussed in the first three modules and relate them to the novel you've read. You'll find out that authors can use short stories, poems, essays, or novels to get you to think about similar aspects of human behaviour.

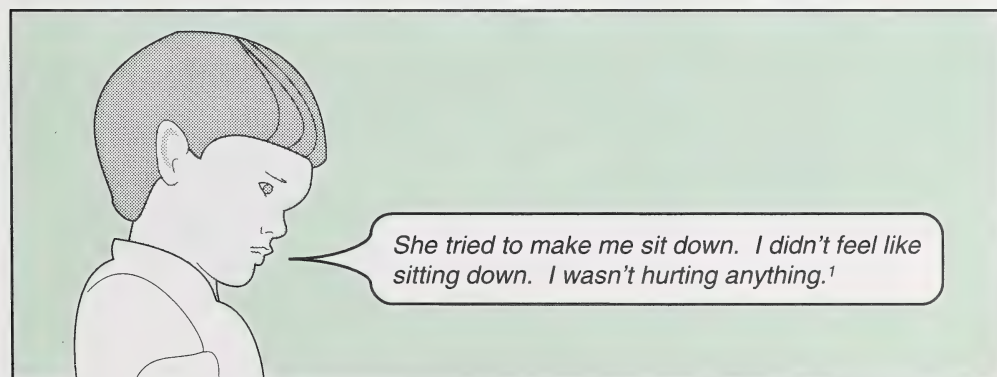
# Activity 1: Major Characters

## Methods of Characterization



You've seen how the characters in a novel are influenced by their setting. In Module 3 you found out that you can learn much about a character by what that character says, does, and values. By referring to Brian O'Connell in *Who Has Seen the Wind*, you'll review these three methods of characterization.

One way to learn about characters is to listen to what they say. On Brian's first day of school he gets into trouble with the teacher because he walks over to talk to a friend without asking permission. This is what he says when he's sent to the principal's office:



1. What do you learn about Brian from this quotation?

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, page 75. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

You also learn about characters by what they do. While his father is in the hospital, Brian has to stay on his uncle's farm and he's bored. He sees the two horses hitched to the hay wagon. Here's a description of his actions:

He loosened the reins and held them between his thumb and forefinger as he had seen Ab and Joe do. His Uncle Sean was nowhere around; Ab was still in the blacksmith shop. . . . He would drive them around the yard a little; it wouldn't hurt anything. He was driving them all alone, he thought with excitement. . . .

They were going somewhat faster than Joe Pivott's horses, thought Brian. He pulled on the reins; but the shoulders and rumps continued to rise and fall – faster if anything. The barn loomed. . . .

The horses galloped free of all restraint, running blind, the rack clattering behind them. . . .

Jounced to his knees, Brian crawled to the side, clutching the edge where blurring ground slipped dizzying by. The rack canted. He'd have to jump. The rack tilted again, and he felt himself going; . . .<sup>1</sup>

2. What do you learn about Brian from this passage?

At the beginning of *Who Has Seen the Wind*, Brian is only four years old and can't understand why his sick baby brother is suddenly getting all the attention.



3. What do you think Brian's thoughts reveal about him?

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, pages 229 to 230. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

<sup>2</sup> W.O. Mitchell, page 5. *Op. cit.*



Sometimes you learn about characters through what others say about them.



4. What do you learn about Brian by what his grandmother says to him?

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.**

Often the narrator of a story will make a direct statement to tell you something important about a character. This excerpt follows the death of Brian's father in *Who Has Seen the Wind*.

There was a new and warmer relationship with his mother now that he turned to her for some of the comradeship he had formerly shared with his father.<sup>2</sup>

5. Think about the two main characters in *A Separate Peace* – Gene and Finny.
- Briefly describe what each is like.
  - Now describe their relationship. If it changes, explain how.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.**

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, page 41. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

<sup>2</sup> W.O. Mitchell, page 250. *Op. cit.*

In Module 3 you practised determining personality traits of characters in stories and providing evidence by quoting lines from the literature. You saw, for instance that when Tom’s mother in “Cornet at Night” says “. . . you’re not interfering with him. He’s going to school tomorrow as usual,” she’s revealing that she considers Tom’s schooling more important than farmwork. She wants her son to develop in ways his father had probably never had the chance to develop.

- 6. Construct two charts like the one that follows – one for Gene and one for Finny; then fill in characteristics and supporting quotations to show what you learned about each boy and how you learned these things. Select key quotations from the novel that you feel show important aspects of each character.

**Note:** Not every work of fiction uses all the methods listed to reveal character. You may have trouble filling every box.

Method	Dialogue	Action	Thoughts	What narrator says	What others say
Gene					

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.

Characters and Values



Knowing characters’ values or beliefs can help make them more believable. Values, as you know, are the things that seem important to people and determine the actions they take. A person who is always on time for appointments probably values promptness. If you vote for leaders because they seem honest and committed, you probably value honesty and commitment.

You have your own set of values, so as a reader you may tend to sympathize with characters whose values are similar.

- 7. Consider your personal values; then complete a checklist about yourself like the following.

What I Believe In	Not Important	Very Important	Important
Loyalty to Friends			
Honesty			
Working for What I Want			
Sharing with Others			
Considering How My Actions Affect Others			
Preparing for the Future			

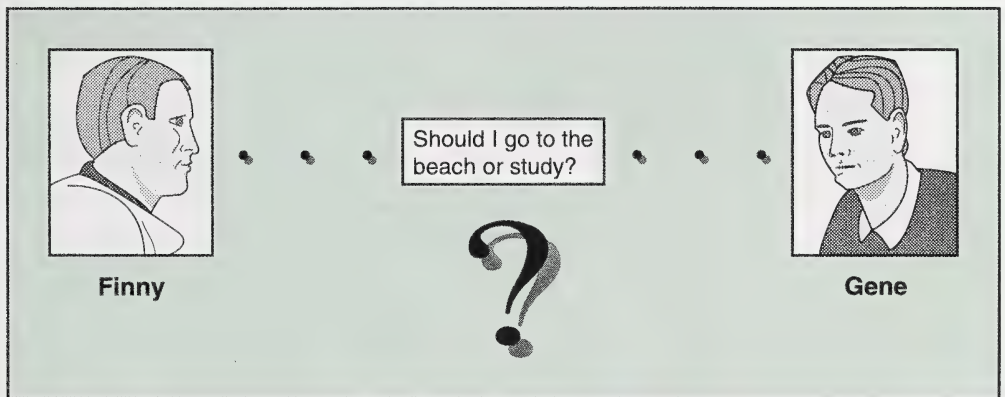
8. Think about a decision you've made recently.
  - a. Did any of the values in the checklist affect your decision? If so, which?
  - b. Are you pleased with the decision or do you regret it? Explain your answer.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.**

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following idea.

Think of a person you admire or respect whose behaviour reflects values that you think are important. Write about this person.

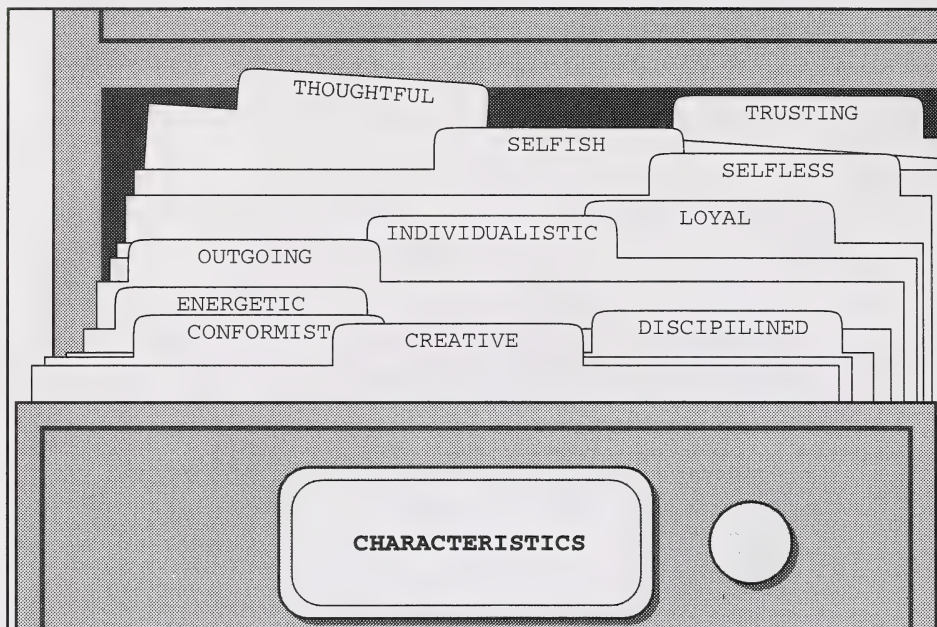


9. The preceding illustration pictures the main characters in *A Separate Peace*. Two characters are pictured trying to make a decision. The questions that follow concern the decisions they come to.
  - a. What does each character decide to do?
  - b. What are his reasons?
  - c. What do his reasons tell you about what's important to each character – in other words, what values he holds?
  - d. If you were in a similar situation, what would you do?
  - e. What does this show about what you value?

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.**



10. Imagine that there's a file of characteristics and your teacher has asked you to add information about Gene and Finny.



From this file of characteristics choose **one** characteristic for **each** of the two main characters in *A Separate Peace* and provide evidence from the story to support your choices.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 1.**

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to the following ideas.

If an author has done a good job of characterization, fictional characters have been created who are just like real people. Readers can predict how they would act in situations outside the novel.

Choose one of the main characters in *A Separate Peace* and show how he'd react if a good friend phoned at two o'clock in the morning saying he or she needed money for an emergency.

Write the conversation your character and his friend would have as a script. If possible, have a friend record your script with you.



## Activity 2: Minor Characters



Minor characters in a novel aren't as fully developed as the major characters, but they have an important purpose nonetheless. Sometimes they're used to contrast with the protagonist (that is, they serve as foils) or to show other points of view about issues that are involved in the conflict of the novel.

There may not be much information given about minor characters in a novel, so you have to make inferences in order to get a complete picture – something you've looked at in earlier modules. Sometimes you have to imagine or create the missing details in your mind so that these seemingly insignificant characters become real people.

*They never heard a strip farmin' an' they don't want a hear! 'Plant yer crops,' I tell 'em, 'in strips across the prevailin' winds – fight the wind an' fight the driftin' . . . Git off yer black prats an' raise some pigs an' cattle too! <sup>1</sup>*



In *Who Has Seen the Wind*, Brian's Uncle Sean is a farmer who sees the need for changing traditional agricultural methods.

1. What do you think a character like Uncle Sean would contribute to your understanding of life during the Great Depression?

Mr. Digby, the school principal, is another minor character in *Who Has Seen the Wind*. He represents goodness and compassion in a small town suspicious of foreigners and full of hypocrisy.

2. From this brief description, how do you think Mr. Digby would respond to the mayor, who refuses to help the Wong family avoid starvation simply because they're Chinese?

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.**

3. Read these descriptions of two minor characters from *A Separate Peace* and *Who Has Seen the Wind*.

**Quackenbush:** His voice sounded almost too mature, as though he were putting it on a little. . . . He had a tough bantam body, easily detectable under the tight sweat shirt he wore. . . . I even sympathized with his trembling, goaded egotism he could no longer contain, the furious arrogance which sprang out now at the mere hint of opposition from someone he had at last found whom he could consider inferior to himself.

– *A Separate Peace*

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchell, 1947, page 18. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.

**The Young Ben:** Ten years old, a child all alone, shoulder blades, and knees, he lifted his blond head high above the children in seats around him . . . He sat always with his narrow, gray eyes distant, one arm over the back of his seat as he stared out the school window to the prairie stretching from the schoolyard edge. He was barefooted. In the rope that served him as a belt, he carried a leather-handled hunting knife.<sup>1</sup>

– *Who Has Seen the Wind*

Now imagine that these two boys have been accused of shoplifting. Basing your answers on the descriptions you've just read, how do you think they'd react? Give reasons for your answers.

4. Choose a minor character from *A Separate Peace* and tell some of what you know about him by constructing and filling in a chart like the one that follows.

Minor Character	Physical Description	Characteristics (what he's like)	Relationship to Main Character(s)	Contribution to the Story (why the author included him)
"Leper" Lepellier				



5. Imagine that you've been asked to talk about the minor character you've selected to a group of people who haven't read the novel. Use your list as notes and give evidence to support your points as you record your talk on tape. Don't write out exactly what you're going to say as this is an informal talk. Help the audience understand the character as well as you do.

If possible, play your recording for a family member or friend. Then talk about the character to see how well you've conveyed your ideas about the sort of person he is.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 2.

### Activity 3: Making Comparisons



#### Making the Links

Whether you're aware of it or not, you're always making comparisons. When you're trying to decide which of two cars to buy, you consider the similarities and differences by comparing such things as price, size, colour, optional equipment, mileage, and safety features.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan Canada for the excerpt from *Who Has Seen the Wind* by W.O. Mitchel, 1947, pages 88 to 89. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Canada.



1. Study the two photographs that follow and, in chart form, list the similarities and differences between the two families pictured.

**Family 1****Family 2**

2. Now look at what you listed as similarities. What do you think is the most important idea that connects these two pictures?

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.**

<sup>1</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta Photograph collection, #A7071.

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Archives of Alberta Photograph collection, #A3487.

In your study of literature in this course you've focused on details such as tone, point of view, irony, and symbolism, but it's important to be able to look at a piece of literature as a whole – to step back and see “the big picture.”

Ask yourself these questions: Why did the author write it? What did I learn about human nature?

Each of the first three modules of the course has a unifying idea. You began with a study of “The Real You.” In the second module, you learned that people can't exist by themselves – that they are dependent on others and affect other people in everything they do. And of course in Module 3 the literature you read compared life to a journey or quest.

Think about the themes expressed in *A Separate Peace*. Then do the Writing Folder exercise that follows.

### WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder respond to **one** of the following ideas.

1. Find one piece of literature (story, poem, or essay) from **each** of the first three modules that you think has a connection to something in *A Separate Peace*. It may be a similar character, theme, or situation. Explain what you consider to be the link between the novel and each of the three selections you choose.
2. Consider what would happen if a character from *A Separate Peace* met a similar character from one of the pieces of literature you read in Module 1, 2, or 3. Write out in script form the conversation they'd have.

By the end of this course you'll be expected to be able to find similarities and connections among the literary pieces you've studied in English 20.

Now that you're almost halfway through the course, you should start looking for this sort of connection. What follows is a partially completed chart showing similarities between *A Separate Peace* and “Day of the Butterfly.”

Works of Literature	Theme	Characters	Symbols	Other
<i>“Day of the Butterfly” and A Separate Peace</i>	<i>Our fears and weaknesses cause us to hurt other people.</i>	<i>Myra and Leper are both alienated because they're different from other students.</i>		

3. Try to find **four** stories, poems, and/or essays from Modules 1, 2, and 3 that are similar to *A Separate Peace* in at least one way. Then construct and complete a chart like the one shown that reveals the similarities you've discovered..

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 3.**

## The Comparison Essay

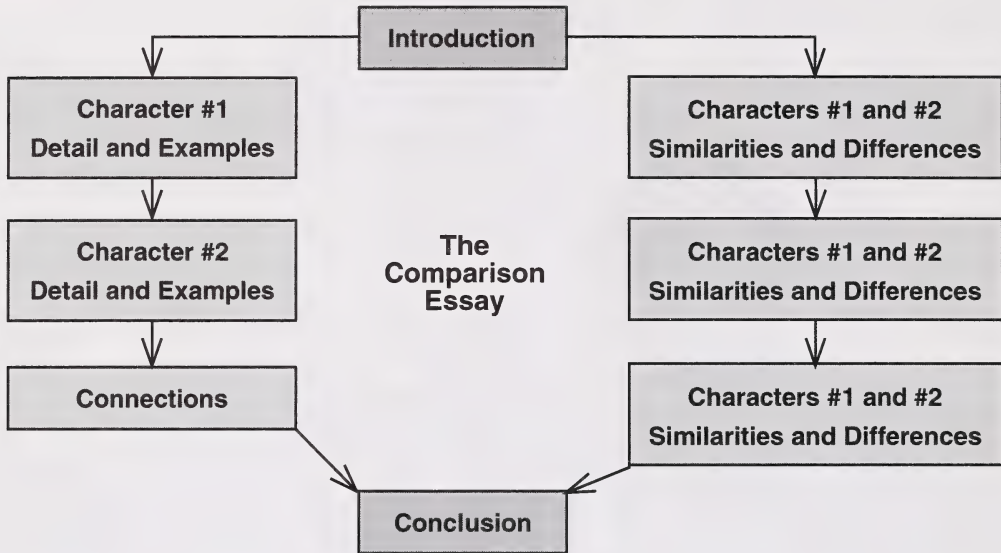
Your Section 3 Assignment will involve writing an essay comparing two characters from literature you've read.



You've been asked in this module to think about the thoughts, words, and actions of some of the characters in your novel and what they tell us about their values and personalities. Once you've gathered the information you need about two characters you're going to compare in an essay, the next step is to write an introductory paragraph that clearly states which piece(s) of literature – and which people – you'll be discussing.



Before beginning to write the body of a comparison essay, you'll need to make a decision. Will you discuss each character separately and then make the connections, **or** will you discuss one similarity about each character in each paragraph? The flow chart that follows illustrates these two approaches.



In the chart the path on the left discusses first one character, then the other. Then connections are made between the two. In the path on the right, each section of the essay discusses both characters, pointing out a specific comparison or contrast. Either approach will work; the important thing is to pick one and **stick to it**.

You've already looked at how to structure an essay in Module 2. Perhaps it would be a good idea to review that material before doing your Section 3 Assignment.

## Activity 4: The Novel's View of Humanity



*Escape fiction:*  
fiction intended  
chiefly to enter-  
tain, providing  
little or no insight  
and usually  
emphasizing plot  
and action

In Module 3 *theme* was defined as “the central idea about life that emerges from a piece of literature.” In many short stories and in some novels it’s possible to discover one predominant theme and to express it in a sentence or two. In fact, in works of literature that can be labelled **escape fiction**, there’s usually very little, if any, meaningful insight into life; this sort of literature is written chiefly just to entertain. By contrast, more serious works, ones that can be called **interpretive fiction**, offer meatier themes; they try to give the reader some understanding of an aspect of the human experience.

*A Separate Peace* is definitely a work of interpretive fiction. It’s entertaining, but it’s more than that; it makes us think. Of course this can make summing up the theme rather difficult, for works of this sort, which can be read at different levels and from different perspectives, are so rich in what they say about life and the human condition that no one, single, universally accepted interpretation of theme can be stated. The more you dig into this sort of literature, the more you come up with.

*Interpretive fiction: fiction intended both to entertain and to offer more insight into human nature or society. . . . It tends to offer a complex view of life rather than one that is simple or predictable.*

Though it's not likely, then, that you'll ever feel you have a complete, in-a-nutshell understanding of the novel you've just read, you should feel that having read it, you've been made to think about life in a new and challenging way. If the novel has made you think, it's done its job.

In this final activity it's this sort of thinking that you'll be asked to do. The questions you'll be considering are ones like these:

- What does the writer of your novel feel about the nature of human beings? Are we inherently good? inherently evil?
- Are human beings simple and easy to understand, or are we creatures somehow at war with ourselves?
- Is the writer optimistic or pessimistic about humanity's future? Is there little hope for salvation, or is there a way out?



*A Separate Peace* is a story about boys approaching adulthood and their loss of innocence. It begins in an idyllic setting – a peaceful private school. Yet the story is set against a backdrop of war and involves, in fact, a war of its own of a different sort.

Read the discussion of *A Separate Peace* that follows. You needn't accept everything said in the discussion you read, but do think about it.

### A Separate Peace

Gene, the central character in *A Separate Peace*, is a boy in whom forces are at war. On the one hand are the positive, loving, open, happy forces that are personified in his friend Phineas. On the other hand are the jealous, vengeful, malicious forces that caused him to shake the branch on which Finny was standing – an act that ultimately brought about Finny's death.



This war between good and evil forces is shown symbolically throughout the novel. For example, Devon School is situated astride two rivers – a pleasant, clean one and a forbidding,

dirty one. The school is peaceful and beautiful, but an ugly war is going on out in the “real world.” Over and over we read lines such as “the wind knifed my face, but this sun caressed the back of my neck,” emphasizing the dual nature of the human reality.

Finny, at least as Gene sees him, is purely good. He refuses to admit the reality of anything he considers ugly – like the war. He can break a swimming record without even practising, but doesn't care if he ever gets credit for it; it was the act of doing it that counts.

In some passages in the novel, in fact, Finny is described almost in supernatural, godlike terms. Here's an example:

“... Phineas in exaltation, balancing on one foot on the prow of a canoe like a river god, his raised arms invoking the air to support him, face transfigured, body a complex set of balances and compensations, each muscle aligned in perfection with all the others to maintain this supreme fantasy of achievement, his skin glowing from immersions, his whole body hanging between river and sky as though he had transcended gravity and might by gently pushing upward with his foot glide a little way higher and remain suspended in space, encompassing all the glory of the summer and offering it to the sky.”

In contrast, read Leper's description as Gene was about to shake Finny out of the tree:

"... and the rays of the sun were shooting past them, millions of rays shooting past them like – like golden machine-gun fire. The two of them looked as black as – as black as death standing up there with this fire burning all around them ... the tree was a huge black shape too, and his hand touching the black trunk anchored him, if you see

what I mean, to something solid in all the bright fire they were standing in up there."

Gene waffles back and forth throughout the novel between the good and evil sides in himself, alternately loving and hating Finny. In the end Finny dies because of Gene, yet Gene tells us that Finny had become a part of him. He killed his enemy at Devon School, he says, not on a European battlefield.

Given your understanding of *A Separate Peace* and the preceding discussion, answer the following question in two or three paragraphs. Refer to the novel directly to defend your position.

Do you feel that the author of *A Separate Peace* was fundamentally optimistic or pessimistic about humankind's nature and the possibility of improving it?

**Compare your response with the one in the Appendix, Section 3: Activity 4.**

## Follow-up Activities

If you found the activities difficult, you should complete the Extra Help. If you understand the concepts clearly, you should complete the Enrichment.

### Extra Help

Do **one** or **both** of the following.

Novelists generally use a variety of methods to convey to readers what the characters they've created are like. Of course they expect active readers, ready to make inferences from what they read.

The principal ways in which the personality of a character is conveyed are

- what the narrator says
- what other characters say
- what the character says
- what the character thinks
- what the character does

1. In Activity 1 you found examples from *A Separate Peace* of these techniques. Now try to invent a character of your own. Imagine what he or she would act like, think like, and talk like. Then, pretending you're a novelist, practise using each technique so as to convey the character's personality to your readers.
2. Cut out pictures, words, or ads from magazines and newspapers to create a collage that shows the personality and favourite activities of a character from *A Separate Peace*. The collage should be a summary of the character that will help other people who have not read the book understand him as well as you do.

**Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Extra Help.**

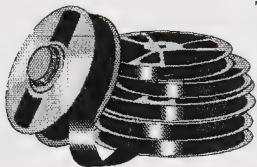


## Enrichment



1.

There has been a movie version made of *A Separate Peace*. If you can, try getting hold of the film version from your local video outlet.



As you watch the film, keep your eye out for changes made by the writers and director. List these changes and explain why you think they were made.

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

## WRITING FOLDER

In your Writing Folder explain which you liked more – the novel or the film based on it. Be sure to give your reasons..

2. *A Separate Peace* is a novel rich in symbolism. Some critics point out that much of this symbolism relates to the Judeo-Christian religious beliefs. According to this interpretation, for instance, the tree from which Finny fell might symbolize the tree of knowledge that caused the “fall” of humanity from grace in the Old Testament story of the creation.

If you're familiar with the Old and/or New Testaments of the Bible, can you point out any other symbolism in *A Separate Peace* that relates to Judaic or Christian religious teachings?

Compare your responses with those in the Appendix, Section 3: Enrichment.

## Conclusion

Getting to know the characters in a novel happens the same way you get to know your next-door neighbours. You find out what they're like by listening to what they say, observing what they do, finding out what they think about certain topics, and hearing what other people say about them. And if you were narrating a story about your neighbours, you'd add your own impressions and ideas about them too. Similarly, writers use these five methods to help you see the fictional characters they create as real people.

In this section you've learned how to make literary comparisons by thinking about the similarities between *A Separate Peace* and short stories, poems, and essays you've read in this course. Knowing that authors often express similar themes and create similar characters and situations will help you get more meaning from the reading you'll do throughout your life.

Finally, in this section you've looked briefly at what the novel you've read reveals about its writer's ideas on life and the human condition. Good literature always has much to say about matters such as these; it's important as you read to be sensitive to just what it is the writer wants to communicate.

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## Section 3 Assignment: Understanding Characters and Making Connections

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 4      Section 3 Assignment      Page #      Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

Write an essay of at least five paragraphs comparing two characters from *A Separate Peace* or a character from this novel and any other character you've studied in the first three modules of this course.

Remember to use the prewriting, writing, revising, and editing processes you've studied in this course. You'll be marked according to these criteria:

- content
- organization
- style
- mechanics

## MODULE SUMMARY



When you open the covers of a novel, you're like a giant peering down into a miniature world, re-created down to the last detail. The time and place serve as the background for the characters who exist in that world. Through their situations, relationships, and experiences, you begin to see an overall theme or purpose to their lives and you can relate what they learn to your own experiences.

The novel you've read in this module was not written just to provide entertainment. Studying the writer's milieu and the setting, characters, and events of the novel should have helped you understand that all the elements of the novel are interrelated. Finding connections to other literature has shown you that authors write about universal themes that have meaning to all readers, no matter where they live or what their age, sex, or education may be. When you pick up a novel or read a play, don't just observe the characters and their world in a detached way; get involved and make your reading a personal experience. It may change your life!

Remember to do this in Module 5, where you'll be reading a modern play.

## Final Module Assignment

Review the Evaluation information found in the introductory pages of this module.

It is important to number and clearly identify each page with the following information at the top:

English 20 – Module 4      Final Module Assignment      Page #      Name and ID #

Be sure to write legibly. Leave a wide left margin and number all of your pages.

In Module 5 you'll be looking at the idea of motifs in literature. A *motif* is simply an idea, a subject, an image, or some other feature that keeps recurring in works of literature – or in a single work of literature. Some common motifs in European fairy tales, for example, are enchanted princes, witches living in the woods, and the abuse of children by “wicked stepmothers.”

In *A Separate Peace*, a dominant motif is that of war.

Discuss the motif of war in *A Separate Peace*. Think about references to real warfare, warlike games, warlike conflicts between characters, and any inner warring going on within the main characters. What does the presence of this motif add to the story? How does it help tie the novel together? How does it help convey the novel's theme, or central insight about life?

Present your answer in a short essay of two or three pages. You'll be marked according to the criteria outlined in previous assignments in this module.

To ensure that all your work has been completed in a satisfactory manner, check off the items in the following list:

- ☐ Section 1 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Section 2 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Section 3 Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Final Module Assignment has been completed.
- ☐ Your responses are organized and neat, with room for teacher comments.
- ☐ All your response pages are numbered consecutively and identified with this heading:


English 20 – Module 4      Section # Assignment Page #      Name and ID #

Submit **only** your **assignment response pages** (along with any audiotape and/or videotape cassettes) for evaluation.





# Appendix

	<b>Glossary</b>
	<b>Activities</b>
	<b>Extra Help</b>
	<b>Enrichment</b>

## Glossary

**character sketch:** a description of the personality of a character – usually from a work of fiction

**milieu:** the environment or surrounding circumstances in which something is set or occurs or in which someone lives

**escape fiction:** fiction intended chiefly to entertain, providing little or no insight and usually emphasizing plot and action

**setting:** the time, place, and circumstances in which the events of a work of fiction take place

**interpretive fiction:** fiction intended both to entertain and to offer some insight into human nature or society. . . It tends to offer a complex view of life rather than one that is simple or predictable.

## Suggested Answers

### Section 1: Activity 1

1. Responses will vary. Here is a list of possible words:

- self-pitying
- forlorn
- dooming
- dismal
- misty
- slogging
- isolated
- forbidding
- enfeebled
- bleakly
- weary

2.

Name/Nickname	Character Clue
Gene Forrester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the narrator</li> <li>• failed his trigonometry test</li> </ul>
Phineas (Finny)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• broke a swimming record</li> </ul>
Chet Douglass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was Gene's competition for head of the class</li> </ul>
Bobby Zane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was first to suggest the name <i>blitzkrieg</i></li> </ul>
Elwin (Leper) Lepellier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refused a pass in blitzball</li> </ul>
Mr. Prud'homme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was substitute master for the summer</li> </ul>
Mr. Patch-Withers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was substitute headmaster</li> <li>• was host of the summer "tea"</li> </ul>

3. Responses will vary. A possible reason is that this technique allows the narrator both to relate how he felt about the novel's events as a boy and to reflect upon them – and what they meant – as an adult.

4. Sketches, of course, will vary a great deal. Finny seems to be a person who loves life and lives it to its fullest. He's a free spirit, unbounded by rules he doesn't believe are good ones, yet a natural leader who sets his own rules according to his views on what's right and wrong and what really matters. He seems to be a person without malice or pettiness in his heart, going so far as to refuse to believe in the reality of aspects of life he doesn't like – such as losing at sports or the war in Europe. Finny is an idealist, and seems to be a truly good, honest, openhearted human being.



5. Responses will vary. Here are possible things you might have mentioned:

- Newspapers had strange maps and names of towns.
- Everyone listened to the news on the radio.
- Waste was immoral, so people saved string and tinfoil.
- Only servicemen travelled to foreign countries.
- The patriotic colour was olive drab (servicemen's uniforms).

## Section 1: Activity 2

1.

### PHINEAS (Finny)



**RULES:** - can talk his way out of trouble

- lives by his own rules

**SPORTS:** - believes that when you play a game, you win

- has won numerous sports awards

**SCHOOL:** - can't do well on written tests

- is just barely passing his courses

**WAR:** - maintains that there is no war

- wants to enlist but pretends he doesn't

### GENE



**RULES:** - conforms to rules

- believes that there are

consequences to breaking rules

**SPORTS:** - is a pretty good athlete

- understands that for every winner there's a loser

**SCHOOL:** - is an A-student in every course but one

- fails a trigonometry test because he can't study

**WAR:** - wonders if he might be a coward

- is ready to enlist but changes his mind

2. Responses will vary. Finny thought Gene had a funny look on his face, so maybe he was unsure of Gene's mood or curious about that look. He might have been a little apprehensive, feeling that something was wrong.
3. Responses will be personal. Based on Gene's thoughts and the resentments that had been building because Finny was keeping him from his studying, it seems that he probably did jiggle the branch on purpose; however, this wasn't a premeditated, malicious act as much as something done on a sudden impulse.
4. Responses will vary. Here's one possibility:

"It was only that he was so ignorant; he shared nothing, knew nothing, felt nothing as Phineas had done."

5. The students at the school had a very unrealistic view of war. The soldiers' appearance was neat and clean, but the places they were going were the battlefields where some would die, others would be wounded, and all would experience the horror of war.
6.
  - a. Brinker said he was going to enlist, so Gene decides to do the same. He also says he wanted to "slam the door on the past and break the pattern of my life."
  - b. Gene forgets about enlisting when Finny returns to school.
7. Gene had always been an optimist, thinking that whatever problems he faced, the next day was a new day and he could begin again. Having to face Finny's disability every day has made him realize that you begin each day with the same problems you had before you went to sleep. He's beginning to face reality.
8.
  - a. Finny says the war is a scheme cooked up by the fat politicians to make sure the young men don't take their jobs. They tell everybody there are food shortages while they feast on the best food.
  - b. Responses will vary. It may be that because Finny sees the world only as it should be, not as it is, he refuses to believe in the ugliness of war. Or, it may be that Finny won't believe in it because he can't take part in it. Did you think of other possibilities?
9. Responses will vary somewhat, but should look something like this:

For a brief time, Gene feels only joy at being alive, being at school, enjoying the innocent fun of the Winter Carnival. At that moment, there is no war, there are no problems, and life is good. He isolates this one moment in his life, away from the ugliness, and enjoys a "separate peace."

You may have more ideas on this question when you've finished the book (note that the title was probably originally inspired by a famous line from a story by Ernest Hemingway: "You and me, we've made a separate peace.").

### Section 1: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary. Here are some possibilities:

Changes	Examples
• has lost touch with reality	<b>He has hallucinations; for example, the arm of a chair turns into a human arm.</b>
• is easily upset	<b>He flies into a rage at the mention of Brinker's name.</b>
• likes to talk	<b>He rambles on about being a "psycho" and tells Gene many details about army life.</b>

2. Here's an example of a completed report:

REPORT OF CRIME

DATE CRIME OCCURRED: August, 1942

COMPLAINANT: Brinker Hadley

WITNESS: Leper Lepellier

SUSPECT: Gene Forrester

LOCATION: Devon School grounds near river

DETAILS:

Gene and Finny were both on the branch of the tree. Gene was near the trunk and Finny was farther out on the limb. They were going to jump out into the river. Gene deliberately jounced the branch causing Finny to fall onto the bank and shatter his leg. Witness refused to identify who was standing near the trunk and who was out on the branch, saying it was too dark. A possible reason for this crime is that Gene wanted Finny out of school because of the rivalry between them.

- 3. Opinions will be personal, but it seems likely that he has. He's the one who told them that Leper was available for questioning. He didn't want it said out loud, but he was emotionally upset when he left, which is probably why he slipped and fell. His behaviour toward Gene later bears out this interpretation.
- 4. A shattered leg kept him from living the kind of life he always had. Being permanently crippled, this former athlete would not be able to participate in the sports he loved so much. Eventually he died as an indirect result of this injury.
- 5.
  - a. They agree that Gene had a momentary blind impulse, and that it wasn't anything personal. They made peace with each other.
  - b. Opinions will be personal. Certainly Gene's action doesn't seem to have been premeditated and thought out, but it did result from his resentment toward Finny.
- 6. Responses will vary. Here are some possibilities:

**Gene:** I'll probably have a lot of training, and I'll never see a foxhole, I hope.

**Brinker:** ...we'll do what we have to do.



### Writing Folder Response

Your response will be personal, but the best answer is probably that Gene was fighting the darker impulses within himself – the impulses that had caused him to resent Finny and shake the branch. It was this aspect of his personality that Gene “killed.”

7. The check marks reflect personal opinions but there probably shouldn't be any marks in the Unsatisfactory column. Teacher Comments might include reference to how Gene has come to know more about himself and the realities of life, has become more spontaneous and open to new challenges, has developed qualities necessary for the Navy though he isn't filled with any hatred for the enemy.

### Section 1: Follow-up Activities

#### Extra Help

1. a. P R U D' H O M M E
- b. P I K E
- c. B R I N K E R
- d. C H E T D O U G L A S S
- e. B R O W N I E
- f. L E P E R
- g. S T A N P O L E
- h. H A Z E L B R E W S T E R
- i. Q U A C K E N B U S H
- j. L U D S B U R Y

2. Responses will vary; compare yours to the ones that follow.

- a. Finny likes to try things that are potentially dangerous. He's a leader and has influence over other boys.
- b. Finny seems to need to be with people. He's persuasive. He considers Gene his best friend and is able to express his feelings out loud, which is often difficult for teenage boys.
- c. Gene has been insecure and has felt the need to invent a past and family that he hopes will give him the respect and admiration he wants from the other boys. Now, as a result of his experiences with Finny, he's more confident and sure of himself.
- d. Gene believes that he and Finny are in competition with each other. Gene excels in academic subjects and Finny is the school's top athlete. Gene has a competitive, jealous streak in him.
- e. Finny and Gene have arrived at an acceptable explanation for the fall from the tree which allows them to remain friends. There is forgiveness and understanding on Finny's part. Gene admits responsibility, but they both agree there was no hatred or anything personal in what he did that night.
- f. Finny reveals that despite himself he's bitter over his injury. It's hurt him to have lost so much of what was most important to him. Still, he's trying to overcome his bitterness.

3.

Quotes	Titles
<b>b</b>	Friendship
<b>a</b>	Taking Risks
<b>c</b>	Adolescent Discovery
<b>f</b>	Changes
<b>d</b>	Rivalry
<b>e</b>	Responsibility

### Enrichment

Responses will be entirely personal. Have you backed up your ideas with arguments and examples? Do you think John Knowles would agree with you?

### Section 2: Activity 1

1. Responses will vary. Here are some possibilities:

- He grew up during the depression of the 1930s.
- He was born and raised in a small town in Saskatchewan.
- His father died when he was young, just like Brian's.
- His father owned a drugstore, just like Mr. O'Connell.
- He was a school principal, just like Mr. Digby.
- He understands the prairie and feels that it's important.
- He's travelled and lived in other places so he's probably come to realize that the types of people he knew in a small town are similar to people everywhere.

2. Responses will vary somewhat. Here are some points you may have brought out:

- John Knowles lived in New England, where the story takes place.
- He attended a prep school similar to Devon School.
- He was in school during the Second World War so he knows how it affected students.
- He was a member of a swim team, which would enable him to write about Finny's breaking the record.
- He speaks French, so he is able to write phrases for Gene and Finny.
- His opinion about the cause of war is stated in the novel.
- His philosophy about accepting human imperfections relates to Gene's acceptance of responsibility.

### Section 2: Activity 2

1. Probably this young man, with his 60s-style clothing and hair, would stand out today.

2. Probably this young man wants to be different from people of his parents' generation, so he grows his hair long and wears clothes to shock them and proclaim his difference. He participates in protest marches because he believes all people are equal and can live together in peace if they stop fighting and learn about love. He wants his appearance and actions to draw attention to the fact that people don't need material possessions to have a good life. His purpose is to do the opposite of what the older generation does and force them to change.

3. a. Unconsciously, he probably is. If you dress and behave in a conservative, conventional manner, you're expressing your agreement with the norms and standards of the majority of people in your society.
- b. Probably not. In wearing more conventional clothing, the father probably isn't deliberately setting out to make a statement.
4. Responses will vary. Here are a few possibilities:
  - Troop trains take recruits to training camp and war.
  - There are food shortages.
  - People believe that waste is wrong: they save tinfoil and string.
  - Recruiters on campus show films to encourage students to enlist.
  - References are made to leaders such as Mussolini, de Gaulle, and Hitler.
  - References are made to the battles of Stalingrad, the Ruhr, and Burma Road.
  - Terms such as *blitzkrieg* and *artillery* are used.
5. Responses will vary, but here is a possible answer with which you can compare your own:

Yes. Understanding World War II and the effects at home of the war in Europe may help explain why the boys' games were aggressive and warlike, why the boys had to clear the train tracks, and why there were no maids in the dormitory in the fall. Background knowledge of the war years is necessary to get the full meaning.

## Section 2: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary. Compare your ideas to the ones that follow.

**Sophia:** Sophia is sensitive and seems to love animals, so the graphic description of ripping the tail off the gopher would likely bother her. She might identify with the Young Ben who also loves animals and wants to end the gopher's suffering quickly and mercifully. Living on a farm and riding horses might have made her realize that gophers destroy crops and their holes cause horses to break their legs, so on another level she might understand why gophers are killed.

**Gord:** Gord has spent a lot of his time living in a city, so he might not be interested in reading about gophers. Seeing a lot of violence in science fiction movies might have dulled his sensitivity to the violence inflicted on the gophers, but this is entirely speculative. Often people from urban backgrounds are more sensitive to animal suffering than are their rural counterparts because they haven't been exposed to the realities of dealing with pets and livestock.

**Jane:** Jane's childhood might well have given her a good deal of experience of nature, so she might be repulsed by Art's wantonly cruel act. Her interest in animal rights certainly bears this out. Perhaps she's been influenced by the culture of her people who have traditionally seen nature as something to be harmonized with, not dominated.

2. **Sophia:** Sophia seems to be a caring and thoughtful person, so she might enjoy reading about the deeper meaning of life. Being from a small town, she could identify many of the types of people and situations Brian encounters. Living on a farm means she could likely relate to a feeling for the land and a closeness to nature.

**Gord:** Gord is used to movies and possibly computer games that have lots of action and move quickly. He might find that a book about a search for meaning moves too slowly and that there's not enough excitement in a story about a small town. On the other hand, he could probably identify with a story about a boy growing up and recall a time when he learned something about life from school or family members.

**Jane:** Jane's rural background, her interest in Canadian history and animal rights, and the overall concern she shows for people and causes would probably make her a likely candidate to enjoy the novel. She seems to be a real go-getter by temperament, however, and sometimes impatient, so she might find this to be a rather slow-moving story.

3. Your Profile Card will, of course, be entirely your own.



4. Responses, again, will be personal, but here are some things you might have considered:
- **The setting:** How familiar are you with the places and times described in the book? Do you have memories of your own that might influence your mental image of the book's setting?
  - **The story:** Was there enough action for you? Do you like more dialogue? Did the events appeal to you?
  - **The characters:** Did you identify with any particular character?
  - **The situations:** Have you been in a similar situation of having to make a difficult decision, being afraid, and so on?
  - **The theme:** What do you believe about friendship or human nature? To what extent are your beliefs similar to the characters' beliefs?

Section 2: Activity 4

1. Your choice of locations may vary, but here are some possible titles for your scenes:

- The Dorm
- First Academy Building
- The Jumping Tree
- The Infirmary
- others?

Did you enjoy illustrating your scenes?

2. You may have chosen different examples of specific incidents, but here are some possibilities:

- The dorm is important because Finny and Gene share a room there and you can see that they are good friends because they borrow each other's clothes. The lack of maid service in the dorm is a point of contrast to show that Finny and Gene are drifting apart.
- The First Academy Building is one of the two places Gene visits when he comes back to Devon after fifteen years. This is where Brinker holds the mock trial that results in Finny's second accident.
- The jumping tree is the focus of the entire story for it is where Finny has the first fall that shatters his leg.
- The Infirmary is the place where Finny is treated after both accidents. He and Gene come to an understanding there about the fall from the tree. This is where Finny dies.

3. There are many possible responses, but some likely suggestions for describing the atmosphere are

- *hopeful*
- *happy*
- *exuberant*
- *optimistic*

4. Responses will vary. Here are some possibilities:

- *suddenness*
- *overnight*
- *startled*
- *quick*
- *suddenly*

5. There will be a variety of responses but here are some possibilities:

- a. peaceful, unhurried
- b. confused, violent

6. The selection of quotations is a personal choice, but these are examples that may give a peaceful, relaxed feeling:

- “cricket noises”
- “rustling early summer movement of the wind”
- “a burst of faint isolated laughter”

7. Responses will vary. A sample follows:

It was a warm, summer afternoon and the sun was shining. The playing fields were green. There were cricket noises, the sound of laughter and music, and the dinner bell. The boys felt a little scared about jumping from the tree into the river but on the way back to the dorm there was good-natured wrestling on the grass. The boys were relaxed and happy because rules were not rigidly enforced during the summer.

8. There may be many different responses to this question of contrast. Here is one possible answer:

The atmosphere seems like a paradise where everyone is happy and nothing ugly or bad happens. However, Gene deliberately causes his best friend to fall and seriously injure himself.

Can you think of other situations that seem to contrast with the paradise setting?

9. There can be many possible responses but here are some suggestions:

- Finny likes danger and risk, so he jumps off the tree that’s forbidden to his class. He’s a leader and makes up the game of blitzball on the playing field, forcing others to play by his rules.
- Gene needs to be alone to think, so he spends time studying in the dorm. He feels responsible for others, so he goes to Vermont to visit Leper and visits Finny in the Infirmary.
- Leper is made fun of by other boys, so he spends a lot of time alone taking pictures of a beaver dam and watching the sun rise on a mountain; after he has a mental breakdown, he spends his days in his dining room.

## Section 2: Follow-up Activities

### Extra Help

1. Responses will vary, but here are some ideas with which you can compare your own:

- The people are probably farmers, judging from the farm that’s visible in the background.
- The men are wearing white shirts, and many have ties, dark jackets, and hats. The women have kerchiefs wrapped around their heads and are wearing long, dark dresses.
- They may well be dressed in their best to go to town.
- The ferry is pulled back and forth across the river by wire cables.
- Transportation includes ferry, horse-drawn wagons, and buggies.

2. Their main concern would probably be surviving day-to-day and hoping that the crops were good. National events likely wouldn’t affect them unless a change in leaders directly affected such things as their crop prices or land titles. International events might seem extremely remote and largely unconnected with their lives.

3. There are many words and images that describe the setting in the opening pages of the novel. Here are some suggestions:

- “The tree was tremendous, an irate, steely black steeple beside the river.”
- “the enormous playing fields”
- “expansive tops of all the elms”
- “formidable chimneys of the dormitories”
- others?

### Enrichment

1. Did the passage remind you of something in your life? Did it make you feel happy, tense, angry? How did your partner's responses differ? Can you think of reasons for the different feelings and associations when you both read the same passage? Think about how your background and experiences influenced your reactions.
2.
  - a. You'll likely be able to list only very general information if you skimmed the chapter.
  - b. If you tried to visualize the details as you read, you will probably be able to describe the atmosphere as well as the objects. When you read carefully, the most vivid image might be a feeling of the place, rather than specific details.
  - c. If you can picture the place being described while you read, you'll probably be able to describe what you read more clearly. The setting will be real to you because you've “seen” it through the author's eyes.
3. How are school boys different today? They start dating at a younger age, so may be more sexually aware. Possibly they work with computers and have different leisure activities. Their family situations may involve single parents or stepparents; they might have part-time jobs while going to school, and they may have problems with drugs or alcohol. Think about the differences in technology: cellular phones, satellite dishes, video games, calculators, video cameras, and so on. Think about the type of war that is fought in the 90s and the sophisticated tracking devices and weapons as well as instantaneous news coverage on television. Think about the social problems that might affect your characters: AIDS, drugs, political scandals, homelessness. Consider events such as earthquakes, assassinations, revolutions, elections.

Would you alter the novel's ending? Were you able to think of ideas for costumes and background music?

### Section 3: Activity 1

1. Brian seems unable to understand why he can't do things at school that he can do at home. He isn't yet aware that in a classroom he has to be part of a group with rules that everyone follows.
2. Responses will vary. Perhaps Brian feels more grown up than he is and believes he can do what men do. He doesn't think about the consequences of his actions.
3. Responses will vary. Brian is likely too young to understand how worried the family is. They don't want the baby disturbed, but Brian feels they're punishing him and that they like the baby more.
4. It seems that Brian has made fun of his grandmother. Perhaps he isn't aware that what he says can hurt others. What does the quotation reveal about Brian's grandmother?
5.
  - a. Responses will vary, but most likely you described Finny as being a free spirit, innocent, joyful, full of life, and a natural leader. Gene, by contrast, is serious, competitive, rather nervous of others, suspicious, yet at heart well-intentioned.
  - b. The relationship between Gene and Finny is very deep. They are best friends, and they do everything together. Their relationship does, however, change. Gene comes to feel resentful of Finny and suspects his motivations. After the first accident Gene is filled with remorse, but gradually the two boys come to need each other more than ever. Gene strives to partake of more of Finny's good qualities. After the second accident the two boys come to an understanding.



6. There are many different characteristics and quotations you could choose. Here's an example for Finny.

	Dialogue	Action	Thoughts	What Narrator Says	What Others Say
Finny	<p><b>He doesn't care about what others think.</b></p> <p>"I don't want to do it in public. . . we aren't going to talk about this. It's just between you and me."</p>	<p><b>He's careless of physical danger.</b></p> <p>. . .and he sprang out, fell through the tips of some lower branches, and smashed into the water.</p>	<p><b>He takes his gifts for granted.</b></p> <p>It seemed he had made some kind of parallel between my studies and his sports. He probably thought anything you were good at came without effort.</p>	<p><b>He's honest.</b></p> <p>Phineas was a poor deceiver, having had no practice.</p>	<p><b>He has trouble accepting unpleasant truths.</b></p> <p>"He's crippled and that's that. He's got to accept it and unless we start acting perfectly natural about it, even kid him about it once in a while, he never will."</p>

Note that in one or two boxes in the sample chart things are stretched a bit: for example, nowhere in *A Separate Peace* do we really know what Finny's thinking, only what Gene assumes he's thinking. That's because the first-person point of view is used rather than the omniscient.

7. Your checklist will, of course, be entirely personal. Did you have any trouble filling it out?
8. a. and b. Again, your responses here will be personal.
9. a. Gene and Finny decide to go to the beach.
- b. Finny goes because "the only real swimming is in the ocean" and because it's risky since going to the beach is forbidden. Gene goes because Finny asks him to. Can you think of other reasons?
- c. Gene feels that his friendship with Finny is more important than his grades. He also feels he has something to prove. Finny likes danger and feels that having fun is more important than studying. What else is important to each boy?
- d. Your response here will be personal.
- e. Were you surprised by what you discovered here, or were you confirmed in something you already knew about yourself?
10. Several of these characteristics could be true of each character. Here are some examples you might have chosen:
- Finny is an **individualistic** boy who doesn't follow rules the way the majority of boys do. Evidence of this occurs when he jumps off the tree because it's forbidden and so he can be the first in his class to try it.
  - Gene is a **loyal** friend, and he goes along with what Finny tells him to do. When Finny breaks the swimming record, Gene agrees not to tell anyone even though he wants to brag about his friend.

### Section 3: Activity 2

- Answers will vary somewhat. Uncle Sean reveals some of the problems farmers faced during the drought of the Great Depression. He also points out ways to keep the topsoil from blowing away (strip farming) and the solution to being too dependent on grain (raising pigs and cattle).
- Mr. Digby would probably be opposed to the mayor's decision and might offer to help the Wongs himself.
- Your answers may be different, but here are some suggestions:
  - **Quackenbush:** His "arrogance" and "the mere hint of opposition" could mean that his attitude would be one of superiority to his accuser. He might say, "Who do you think you're talking to? I'm a Quackenbush, I don't need to steal."

- **The Young Ben:** From the description, he seems different from other children his age, and his tending to look out to the prairie shows he probably enjoys freedom and being by himself. If accused, he might not say anything – just stare with “his narrow, gray eyes distant.”
4. There are many other minor characters to choose from, but here’s one example.

Minor Character	Physical Description	Characteristics (what he’s like)	Relationship to Main Character(s)	Contribution to the Story (why the author included him)
“Leper” Lepellier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• face is pinched and pink</li><li>• wears steel-rimmed glasses</li><li>• wears dull green deerstalker cap, brown ear muffs, a thick grey woollen scarf</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• loves nature</li><li>• is made fun of by others</li><li>• likes to spend time alone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• regards Gene as his best friend</li><li>• tells Gene about his army experience</li><li>• refuses to tell Brinker if Gene deliberately caused Finny to fall</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shows how war is destructive of sensitive individuals</li><li>• brings home reality of war</li><li>• helps “convict” Gene and so causes Finny’s second, fatal fall</li></ul>

5. Listen to the tape after you record the talk about a minor character and use this checklist to evaluate yourself.

Organization	Was there a definite beginning and end?
Voice	Did you speak clearly? Did you vary your voice? Did you sound interested in the topic?
Fluency	Were there a lot of pauses?
Content	Did you make at least three points about the character? Did you provide evidence from the novel?

People tend to use a more informal style when they talk. Written descriptions are often more formal. Don’t worry if there were a lot of pauses or some stumbling on the tape. You had to speak from a list and make sentences as you spoke. This is difficult even for practised speakers.

Section 3: Activity 3

1. Responses will vary. Here are some ideas.

Similarities	Differences
family grouping	one family Caucasian; other Métis
same time period	two generations versus three generations
same housing construction	different number of children
probably same economic and social class	one group more formally dressed
probably in same part of country	others?

2. Responses will vary. Both pictures show western pioneering families. They seem to convey the hardships of pioneering life and the toughness and determination required of early settlers. Did you come up with other ideas?

3. Look at the example given just before the question. Remember that a theme is always written as a complete sentence and expresses a main idea. Not all stories or poems will have similarities in all the categories given for the novel, so there may be some blank spaces on your chart. By finding at least one similarity in four different pieces of literature, you've shown that you're able to make literary connections.

### Section 3: Activity 4

Responses will vary. The writer seems to recognize the inherent presence of evil in human beings. It's this tendency that makes Gene resent Finny and ultimately causes him to shake the branch so that Finny falls. However, the argument can certainly be made that he is fundamentally optimistic. After all, Gene did defeat his "enemy" – his own evil tendencies – and somehow incorporated Finny's goodness in himself.

Do you agree? Is your interpretation the same? Do you agree with the views of the writer of your novel? Did you defend your arguments with direct references to the novel?

### Section 3: Follow-up Activities

#### Extra Help

1. Were you able to use all five methods? If you can, get a friend or family member and show them what you've written. See if they make the inferences you'd intended.
2. After you've finished your collage, consider these questions: Does the collage accurately reflect the character? Have you considered the size of the various objects in the collage? Which is the most important? Usually, the bigger the item, the more important it seems. Does every item in the collage tell something about the character?

If possible, ask someone who's read the book to comment on the accuracy and completeness of the collage. Ask someone who hasn't read the book to tell you about the character based on the information and pictures you've included in the collage.

#### Enrichment

1. Think about the differences you noted in viewing the film. Were the changes made for practical reasons, or were they changes in interpretation? Did you like the changes, or did they alter the story and characters too much? Were the majority of changes made to the characters, action, or setting? If possible, show your list of differences to someone who's read the book and seen the movie. Does that person agree with your comments?
2. Responses will vary. Here are some ideas with which you may or may not agree:
  - The tree could symbolize the cross on which Christ died.
  - Finny, in a way, could symbolize Jesus. He seemed to be a truly good human being who died because of the "sinfulness" of another.
  - Gene's overcoming his evil nature through Finny's death might reflect the Christian belief that it's through Christ's death that people can attain salvation.
  - Gene's suffering guilt and self-recrimination before defeating his "enemy" might reflect the Christian doctrine of redemption through suffering.

Were you able to come up with other ideas? A word of caution is in order here. Don't get the idea that *A Separate Peace* is somehow a simple allegory for aspects of the Bible; rather, the author – like many authors – may have made certain symbolic references to biblical events and Christian doctrines to make his novel richer and more meaningful.



## **NOTES**

## NOTES





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